

Scoil Asicus Naofa National School Strandhill, Co. Sligo

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Anti- Bullying Policy

Date of last Review & Ratification: March 2023

The following documents must be read in conjunction with this policy:

a) Anti-Bullying ProceduresForPrimary and Post- Primary Schools

b) Circular 045/2013

Anti-Bullying Policy Template Introductory Statement

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 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 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;
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a nonthreatening 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)

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,
- 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, 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 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

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

- All class teachers
- Resource and Learning Support teachers
- Principal,
- Deputy Principal.
- Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

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, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

School-wide approach

- A school-wide approach to 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 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.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention. (April 2014 Presentation to staff and parents by Sean Fallon of Anti-Bullying Campaign)
- An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external source.
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community. (April 2014 Presentation to parents by Sean Fallon of Anti-Bullying campaign)
- 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. Through the Broadband Filtering Network and our mobile phone policy the scope for cyber-bulling to occur as a result of access to technology from within the school is minimised. The school website and Twitter accounts are moderated by teachers to ensure that no hurtful comments are posted. Attempts by pupils to do so are reported to parents. Parents are discouraged 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 we become aware of incidents of cyber-bullying outside of school, we reserve the right to become involved in cautioning pupils against such behaviour and informing parents.
- Lunchtime Buddies for Junior Classes 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 included in student journals and displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.

- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and is made available to all parent(s)/guardian(s) s via the school website. A simplified version of the policy will be made available to children.
- The implementation of regular whole-school awareness measures such as:
- o a dedicated notice board in the school
- School assemblies
- the school newsletter
- o Kindness Week each January.
- Student surveys
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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.:
 - O Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
 - o Hand up note with homework.
 - o Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
 - o Anti-bully or Niggle box?
 - o 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.
- Identify 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

- The full implementation of the SPHE and RSE and Stay Safe and Grow in Love Programmes.
- 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)
- 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.
- There is also 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.
- We seek to ensure an annual talk to children on the subject of online safety and cyber-bullying to be provided by an outside agency with expertise in this area.

Links to other policies

Code of Behaviour Child Protections policy Supervision of pupils Acceptable Use policy, Attendance School Ethos
Sporting activities.

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

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 (Taken from Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools Section 6.8)

(1) 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;

- (ix) 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;
- (x) 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;
- (xi) 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:
- (xii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
- (xiii) 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;
- (xiv) 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;
- (xv) 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;
- (xvi) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should 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. This can have a therapeutic effect;
- (xvii) 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 be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at **Appendix 3** (See Section 6.8.10 (iii));

Follow up

- (xviii) 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:
- a) Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
- b) Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
- c) Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
- d) Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
- (xix) 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;
- (xx) In the event that 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- 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.

<u>Formal Stage 2 – Appendix 3 (Fron DES_Procedures)</u>

- The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 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 3** 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 3** 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 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 DLP – Designated Liaison Person (Mr. Fogarty).

Established intervention strategies

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- 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
- Implementing questionnaires (as suggested in Sean Fallon -Anti-Bullying campaign)

6. 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):

- Bullied pupils:
 - o Ending the bullying behaviour
 - Improving the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils.

- o Improving the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils.
- 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)

• Bullying pupils:

- o Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed and will get a "clean sheet".
- o Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this.
- o 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)

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.

7. 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.

8. Prevention of Harassment

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. This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 14th March 2023.
- 10. 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.

11. 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: 14th March 2023.

Príomhoide

Date: 14th March 2023.

Date of next review: Oct / Nov meeting of BOM 2023

Spokal Jouley

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

	Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality				
General behaviours	legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying,				
which apply to all	racist bullying etc.				
types of bullying	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 croffiti				
	Offensive graffitiExtortion				
	Intimidation				
	T 1.1 CC 1				
	Insulting or offensive gesturesThe "look"				
	 Invasion of personal space 				
	 A combination of any of the types listed. 				
	• Denigration: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's				
Cyber	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 messagesAbusive email				
	Abusive emailAbusive communication on social networks e.g.				
	Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles				
	• Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures				
	Abusive website comments/Blogs/1 retures Abusive posts on any form of communication technology				
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	ine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender vil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and				
Homophobic and Transgender Race, nationality,	 Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbianused in a derogatory manner Physical intimidation or attacks Threats Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or 				
ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	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 • 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 • 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 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour

(tick relevant box(es))* Pupil concerned Other Pupil Parent Corridor Teacher Other Other Other 5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern 6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) * Physical Aggression Damage to Property Intimidation Isolation/Exclusion Name Calling 7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category: Homophobic Disability/SEN related Racist Membership of Traveller community 8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact	Name		Class				
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8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact	Homophobic		Racis	t		Other (specify)	
		related			Traveller community		
9. Details of actions taken	8. Brief Descri	ption of bullying b	ehavio	ır ar	nd its impact		
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10. Outcome of review within or at 20 days.
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

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- 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.