



Tobar an Léinn N.S

"Tas Maith"

School Position on Bullying

The Tobar an Léinn N.S. school community believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore it does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the well being of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

Anti-Bullying Policy

Reviewed 07/02/2023

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 Tobar an Léinn N.S. has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.
2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:
 - **A positive school culture and climate which –**
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
 - **Effective leadership;**
 - **A school-wide approach;**
 - **A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;**

- **Implementation of education and prevention strategies** (including awareness raising measures) that –
 - Build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying 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. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, 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.

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

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

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

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. The “Relevant Teacher(s)” for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school is/are as follows:

Principal and all class teachers

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

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

Ballinakill N.S. adopts 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 highlighting the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. and stereotyping, and highlighting the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

Creating a culture of telling:

The staff of Tobar an Léinn N.S. repeatedly reinforce the message that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported. Reassurance is given that all incidents of bullying will be dealt with in a safe manner. Pupils will gain confidence in telling, which is of vital importance.

Bystanders can be the key to resolving bullying. 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 the teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
- Hand note up with homework.
- Ask a parent(s)/guardian(s) to tell on your behalf.
- Ask a friend/peer to tell on your behalf.
- Administer a confidential questionnaire.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

Supervision and monitoring:

Effective supervision and monitoring systems facilitate early intervention.

Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, hall, playgrounds, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities.

Non-teaching staff are encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.

Supervision also applies to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.

Professional Development:

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.

Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s).

Raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour by:

- The development of dedicated display boards and posters in the school promoting friendship and bullying prevention.
- The anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and is also available on the school’s website.
- Anti-Bullying week held in Tobar an Léinn N.S.

Promoting a positive sense of self-worth and building empathy and resilience in pupils:

- Promoting Random Acts of Kindness throughout the year.
- Rewarding incidents of good and improved behaviour at a whole school level
- Extracurricular activities available for all pupils.
- Formal and informal interactions.
- Celebration of Anti-bullying week.
- Development of Buddy Programmes in order to help support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development of the use of a Friendship/Buddy Stop

Cyber bullying:

- Promoting awareness of Tobar an Léinn N.S. Acceptable Use Policy and ensuring that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
- Communicating the message that unlike other forms of bullying, a once-off posting can constitute bullying.
- Advice will be communicated to help students protect themselves from being involved in bullying and to advise them on reporting any incidents. A telling atmosphere is created, so that pupils will report cyber bullying where they see it.
- Publicising ways of dealing with cyber bullying in the school.
 - Don't reply.
 - Keep the message.
 - Block the sender.
 - Tell someone you trust
- Promoting 'Internet Safety Day' annually and activities to celebrate this awareness.
- Teaching of lessons to deal with the issues of cyber bullying and internet safety.

Our school's approach to tackling and preventing bullying takes particular account of the needs of pupils with SEN, and joins up with other relevant school policies and supports and will ensure that all services and supports and will ensure that all the services that provide for such pupils work together. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils for pupils with SEN include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.

Initiatives and programmes focused on developing pupils' awareness and understanding, including its causes and effects, will deal explicitly with the issue of identity-based bullying. Where issues of identity-based bullying arise, the school will deal with them in an individual, group, class, or whole school context in consultation with the parents/guardians of the children involved. The ethos of the school and the age and stage of the children's development will be taken into consideration.

Implementation of the curricula

Teachers influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives. There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness.

SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the interrelated areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.

The Stay Safe programme is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. RSE aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way. The programme, Zippy's Friends has been introduced in the 1st & 2nd classroom.

Other resources and programmes that may be used include: PDST Anti-Bullying Support Material, Prim-Ed Cyber Bullying Packs, Webwise Cyber Bullying Pack, Webwise My Selfie Lessons, Walk Tall.

Links to other policies

- This policy is part of our Code of Conduct and should be read in conjunction with all Code of Conduct policies.
 - Child Protection policy
 - Acceptable Use policy
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, (e.g. the six step approach available from the "Dealing with Incidents" section of the Anti-Bullying Campaign website) are as follows:
- The 'Relevant Teacher' investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, whether these take place within the school or outside it, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end.
 - The School, through the 'Relevant Teacher' reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened, as part of an investigation. This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.
 - Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the 'Relevant Teacher' to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it. In the event that they have been involved in bullying behaviour they are asked to sign a binding promise that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s).
 - The 'Relevant Teacher' does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a "mistake" that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. Pupils who report bullying therefore are not getting others "in trouble" so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continues.
 - When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information.
 - If a pupil has signed such a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a "mistake." In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed and requested to countersign their daughter/son's promise. Breach of this additional promise by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities (See sanctions below).
 - All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school.
 - Sanctions:

Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that promise, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:

- S/he may be required to sign another promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be contacted by the 'Relevant Teacher' and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the 'Relevant Teacher' and the Principal and the pupil may be suspended from school.
- The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be expelled from the school.

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

- Bullied pupils:
 - Ending the bullying behaviour,
 - Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
 - Changing 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 awareness-raising programme,
 - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
 - After resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a victim-impact statement,
 - Making adequate counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner,
 - 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).
 - Implementing a "buddy system" in the school,
- Bullying pupils:
 - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a "clean sheet,"
 - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this,
 - Making adequate counselling facilities available to help those who need it 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, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
 - In dealing with bullying behaviour, seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a "clean sheet" and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils:
The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.
9. The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps as are reasonably practicable to prevent the 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 30/09/2021
11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website *(or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible 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 Skills and to the patron if requested.
12. 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. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: ___/___/_____

Date: ___/___/_____

Date of next review: 07/02/20

Appendix 1

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

- **Repeated aggressive behaviour/attitude/body language, for example:**
 - Shouting and uncontrolled anger,
 - Personal insults,
 - Verbal abuse,
 - Offensive language directed at an individual,
 - Continually shouting or dismissing others,
 - Public verbal attacks/criticism,
 - Domineering behaviour,
 - Open aggression,
 - Offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact.
- **Intimidation, either physical, psychological or emotional, for example:**
 - Treating in a dictatorial manner,
 - Ridicule,
 - Persistent slagging,
 - Deliberate staring with the intent to discomfort.
 - Persistent rudeness in behaviour and attitude toward a particular individual.
 - Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. personal life/family
 - Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. social life or schoolwork.
- **Interference with property, for example:**
 - Stealing/damaging books or equipment
 - Stealing/damaging clothing or other property
 - Demanding money with menaces
 - Persistently moving, hiding or interfering with property
 - Marking/defacing property
- **Undermining/Public or Private Humiliation, for example:**
 - Condescending tone,
 - Deliberately withholding significant information and resources,
 - Writing of anonymous notes,
 - Malicious, disparaging or demeaning comments,
 - Malicious tricks/derogatory jokes,
 - Knowingly spreading rumours,
 - Belittling others' efforts, their enthusiasm or their new ideas,
 - Derogatory or offensive nicknames (name-calling),
 - Using electronic or other media for any of the above (cyber bullying),

Disrespectfully mimicking a particular individual in his/her absence,
Deliberately refusing to address issues focusing instead on the person.

- **Ostracising or isolating, for example:**

Deliberately marginalising an individual

Deliberately preventing a person from joining a group,

Deliberately preventing from joining in an activity, schoolwork-related or recreational

Blaming a pupil for things s/he did not do.