

## Anti-Bullying Policy

### AIMS

- To promote a culture in which pupils and staff will feel secure and confident and will tell staff if they are being bullied or are aware of others who are being bullied.
- To promote a non-judgemental approach. Instead of using the ‘blame / punishment’ approach, we advocate challenging and changing the inappropriate behaviour. Labelling someone as a ‘bully’ is not helpful.
- To design procedures and strategies to help those involved in Bullying including the victim and the Bully.
- To raise awareness among pupils, staff and parents of the nature of Bullying and its effects on the school community.
- To raise awareness among staff of the nature of bullying/inappropriate behaviour on staff members from parents/members of the public/colleagues and procedures to follow in such an event.
- To provide resources and materials to help address the problem on both a class and whole-school basis
- To create a happy, safe environment where mutual respect is consistently promoted and accepted by everyone

### SCHOOL ETHOS

The school is committed to Gospel values in its daily living. This is reflected in the School Mission Statement and Aims.

Central to this is the maxim: *always treat others as you would like them to treat you*, and this, in turn, underpins our Anti-Bullying Policy.

### A DEFINITION:

**Repeated, deliberate behaviour designed to physically or emotionally hurt, belittle or make fun of another.**

Types of Bullying include:

*Direct Bullying*

*Indirect Bullying*

*Cyber-Bullying*

It may manifest itself as fighting, threatening (either verbally or by using gestures), extortion, name-calling, excluding, whispering, ignoring or using electronic forms of contact via text messages, telephone calls, mobile phone cameras, e-mail, chat rooms, instant messaging and websites, X boxes and Nintendo DS.

The use of mobile phones is strictly forbidden.

*“Bullying is a deliberate form of aggressive behaviour that is conducted by a young person or group of young people, on a systematic and ongoing basis, against a young person who is singled out, and is relatively unable to defend himself or herself.*

*It is not bullying, for instance, when young people of around the same age and level of physical / social power have the occasional fight or quarrel.”* ( Dr. Stephen Minton, Presentation to Scoil Íosagáin School Community 12<sup>th</sup> October 2011.)

While we accept that Bullying has happened and will happen again in our school, we are **determined** that

- our Anti-Bullying policy will ensure the protection of our school community through early detection and response and
- pupils, staff and parents will be equipped with the information, knowledge and skills to help prevent bullying behaviours.

## **PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES**

- We endeavour to create a warm and welcoming environment/ethos/rules
- Circle Time is a methodology recommended in all classes and used to develop Emotional Literacy
- Anti-Bullying Week is held annually
- Discreet Anti-Bullying lessons are taught in all classes every November (Social Personal and Health Education)
- Questionnaires will be administered to pupils at least annually to review the situation
- A wide range of books and resources are available for teachers and pupils
- Social Stories are recommended where appropriate for pupils with Special Educational Needs
- Drama is used as a methodology to support pupils and develop confidence
- Lunchtime Clubs promote friendship, understanding and co-operation
- The Roots of Empathy Programme teaches empathy and fosters appreciation of others’ feelings
- Friendship is celebrated
- Staff/parents to communicate professionally and treat each other with respect (To be reviewed 2013/14 in the context of Home/School Communications.)
- Pupils will not be permitted to take mobile phones to school.

## **PROCEDURES**

- Children will be encouraged to tell “It is right to tell”.
- Any case of suspected or alleged bullying reported to a member of staff will be recorded
- Parents will be encouraged to tell and share information with the Class Teacher.

- “Share and Tell Boxes” will be placed at Reception areas of Infant and Senior Buildings where pupils can leave notes about concerns regarding themselves or others. However, pupils will always be encouraged to tell.
- “Share and Tell Boxes” will be checked at least twice a week.
- Pupils will be encouraged, where appropriate, to record instances of bullying.
- Any case of suspected Bullying will be reported by the Class teacher to the Principal.
- After initial investigation carried out by Class teacher and Principal, where appropriate Parents will be informed and follow-up arranged.
- As Bullying is considered a Serious Misbehaviour under the School’s Code of Behaviour procedures will be followed as outlined therein.
- Principal will inform Board of Management of any serious incidents of bullying.
- Where it has been brought to the attention of staff that pupils have been victims of cyber bullying parents will be informed.
- Where it has been brought to the attention of staff that pupils may have been bullied outside of school staff will inform Principal and/or parents.
- A copy of the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy will be given to parents when they enrol their children in the school. A copy will be posted on the school website.
- Parents will be informed of the activities taking place during Anti-Bullying week in November.
- Advice from Dr. Minton will be sought from time to time to ensure that Scoil Íosagáin operates in accordance with best practice.

## QUESTIONS

The following questions will be used when following- up cases of alleged bullying:

- Questions to the alleged bully:
  - What happened?
  - What were you thinking then/since?
  - Who could have been affected/hurt/sad/upset?
  - What could you have done differently?
  - What needs to happen now to make things right?
- Questions to the alleged victim:
  - What happened?
  - What did you think when you realised what was happening?

How did this impact on/hurt/upset you?  
How did this impact on/hurt/upset others?  
What was the hardest thing?  
What needs to happen now to make things right?

Wording will be adapted for pupils in Junior classes as follows

Questions to alleged bully:  
Tell me what happened  
What made you (a) angry (b) sad (c) upset (d) afraid?  
How do you think (victim) feels?  
How would you feel if he/she did this to you?  
What would have been a better choice?  
How can we make things better?  
Is there anything else you want to say?

Questions to the alleged victim:  
Tell me what happened?  
Was anyone else involved?  
Are you hurt?  
Where are you hurt?  
Tell me how this made you feel? ( angry, sad, upset, afraid )  
What would make things better?  
Is there anything else you want to tell me?

As part of the follow-up to any incident of alleged bullying a Bullying Report will be completed.

## **ROLES**

- The Class Teacher will raise the issue during Circle Time (a whole-class, democratic approach to discussion and problem solving)
- The teacher with Special Duties related to Anti-Bullying will organise activities to high-light bullying and help children recognise and address issues as they arise
- The teacher with Special Duties related to Anti-Bullying will organise activities and workshops for staff every 3 years
- The teacher with Special Duties related to Anti-Bullying will organise information sessions and workshops for parents every 3 years
- The teacher with Special Duties related to Anti-Bullying and /or the Principal will check Boxes

- The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring that all members of the school community are enabled to deal effectively with Bullying. The Board will ensure that proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to prevent Bullying and to deal with incidents appropriately as they arise.
  
- It is the responsibility of Parents/Guardians to encourage their children to behave in an appropriate manner; to adhere to the rules of the school. Parents can also watch out from signs that their child is being bullied or bullying others. They have an important role to play in helping to build their child's self-esteem and confidence and provide a vital link between home and school.

This Policy was reviewed and amended in July 2013 during a school-based Summer Course. It had previously been reviewed and amended in October-December 2011 and January 2012 following:

- In-service for whole-school staff from Dr. Stephen Minton, School Of education, Trinity College, Dublin.
- Workshop for parents by Dr. Stephen Minton, School Of education, Trinity College, Dublin.
- Meetings with Special Duties Teacher and School Principal
- Dissemination of Draft Policy to whole-school staff
- Dissemination and discussion with Parents Policy Review Committee

This Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis every November.