GAELSCOIL CHARRAIG UÍ LEIGHIN

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Approval:

This document requires approvals to be signed off.

Name	Title	Date
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Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

Gaelscoil Charraig Uí Leighin drew up this Anti-Bullying Policy in conjunction with parents and the Board of Management. The role of the school is to endeavour to provide the highest possible standard of education for all its pupils. A stable, secure learning environment is essential to achieve this goal. Bullying behaviour by its very nature undermines and dilutes the quality of education and imposes psychological damage. All types of bullying behaviour can be damaging but it can also be difficult to detect.

In dealing with any incident of bullying behaviour, the school does not operate in isolation and must have parental co-operation.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department 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, 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.

Definition

"Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others".

It is important that all the children, teachers, parents and the school community have a clear understanding of what bullying behaviour is and how this behaviour can have a very serious impact on the person who is being bullied.

Regardless of whether initiated by an adult or a child, any type of bullying behaviour that affects any member of the school community is unacceptable.

Bullying can take many forms, but its aim is always to make a person feel upset, intimidated or afraid. The most common forms of bullying are:

- Physical: pushing, shoving, kicking, hitting etc.
- Verbal: name-calling, teasing, insulting, humiliating etc.
- Emotional: making threats, spreading rumours, excluding, ignoring etc.
- Non-verbal: making suggestive, provocative or intimidating gestures etc.
- 'Cyber-Bullying': sending threatening or upsetting messages or images etc. Using group messaging such as what's app, Viber etc. to target a member of the school community
- Personal property: threats against or damage to a person's property etc.
- Adult Behaviour: Sarcastic, insulting talk about a person's appearance/background/professional competency. Talking in a demeaning manner or any physical action that would frighten a person etc.

Please note:

- bullying behaviour is very different to the arguments and disagreements children may have at school

- every incident is different and cannot always be dealt with in the same manner
- this policy covers parents, students, staff and all other members of the school community

Aims of policy

- To ensure that pupils, staff and parents understand what bullying is and how it can be combated.
- To ensure that practices and procedures are agreed to prevent incidents of bullying.
- To ensure that reported incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively and quickly.

Understanding Bullying

There are many reasons why children bully. It may occur because of something else in the child's life e.g. a new baby, a death, a sudden illness, problems at home or at school. Children who bully are often bullied themselves. Some suffer from a lack of confidence, low self-esteem, are attention seekers or are trying to impress others.

All children need to have good self-esteem and the confidence to say 'no' and to tell. We must all strive towards building your child's esteem and confidence. This can be done in the way you praise, encourage, talk and listen to your child. This self-belief will be of great help to any child dealing with any situation

Understanding Cyber-Bullying

Cyber bullying is the use of ICT, Information and Communication Technology, (usually a mobile phone and/ or the internet) to abuse another person

- It can take place anywhere and involve many people
- Anybody can be targeted including pupils, school staff or parents
- It can include threats, intimidation, harassment, cyber-stalking, vilification, defamation, exclusion, peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorized publication of private information or images etc.

While bullying involves a repetition of unwelcome behaviour, the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, September 2013, states in section 2.1.3 that:

"In addition, in the context of these procedures 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."

Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:

- Creating a school environment that builds empathy, respect, and resilience in its pupil-----s and lives by a code of treating everyone with dignity.
- Foster an attitude of respect amongst all in our school community- to promote the value of diversity, address prejudice and to highlight bullying
- Providing clear guidance as to what is considered bullying behaviour and how the school will deal with bullying.
- A staff day/ Awareness Day /week may be introduced in the school to build confidence, affirm some children and give a clear message that bullying will not be tolerated.
- A school wide approach with parental involvement

  - Parental awareness and co-operation in prevention, identification of: cyberbullying, homophobic bullying, transphobic bullying etc.
  - Anti-bullying committee See Appendix E
  - Assemblies for class groupings, Ranganna 1-2, Ranganna 3-6 where bullying is mentioned and explained to children, that telling is encouraged and that the teachers and children are seen to be active agents in preventing bullying behaviours
  - Adults (teachers and parents) have a responsibility to model positive behaviours in the school environment, being respectful of technology, showing kindness to others, and being open-minded to diversity.
- Recognising that parents have a major responsibility in addressing their child's behaviour -school identifying positive behaviour
- Provide pupils with the opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through a wide variety of both curricular and extra curriculum programmes.
- All staff display a positive attitude and manner through a range of curricular initiatives e.g.
  - SPHE
  - Stay Safe
  - RSE
  - Health Promoting Schools Programme

Procedure for Instances of Bullying Behaviour (Diagram Appendix A)

The relevant teacher dealing with bullying in the school is usually the class teacher but all teachers have responsibility for a community care approach to bullying prevention in our school.

1. Member of school community observes / is notified of suspected bullying behaviour.
2. It is reported to teacher. The matter is investigated in a way that gives each child a fair hearing (clear information about the incident). The school will follow best practice from NEPS (National Education Psychological Service). Reports will be investigated, recorded and filed if bullying behaviour is confirmed. If unsure, the suspected bullying form can be used. This form can be transferred to the bullying form if confirmed or else destroyed with 20 school days.
3. It is reported to Principal/Deputy Principal (who should be notified of all incidents of bullying behaviour)
4. Parents made aware of alleged bullying behaviour
5. If an incident recurs, the following steps could be taken
   a. Meeting with children separately/ together in a 'no blame' environment to try to resolve, reconcile and move forward
   b. Every effort is made to reconcile the children involved.
   c. Meeting with parents and children, of both sides, separately/ together/ speak to children with parents /teacher/ Principal.
   d. Meeting between all the above & if required members of Board of Management. An agenda would be agreed to beforehand.
   e. With no resolution of the incident it is at the Board's discretion to suspend the child in question

Depending on the severity of the incident, it may be deemed necessary to skip certain steps.
An Garda Síochána will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content when applying our anti-bullying policy.

Procedure to prevent Bullying and Cyber Bullying Behaviour

- Discuss with children what bullying behaviour is and inform them of how they will be expected to behave and the repercussions that will happen if bullying occurs.
- Staff, pupils, parents, and Board of Management (BoM) will be made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying through the use of appropriate awareness raising exercises
- Pupils will learn about cyber bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), assemblies and other curriculum projects
- The school will engage a speaker to facilitate a workshop on cyber bullying for 3rd to 6th classes periodically.
- Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) will assist in learning about current technologies
- Parents will be provided with information and advice on how to combat cyber bullying
- Pupils and parents will be urged to report all incidents of cyber bullying to the school
- All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated, recorded, stored in the Principal's office and monitored regularly
- The Gardaí will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content when applying our Anti - bullying Policy

Referral of serious cases to the HSE

In relation to bullying in schools, Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 (Children First) and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools provide that in situations where "the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan".

Serious instances of bullying behaviour are, in accordance with the Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

Programme of Support

Such pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities should be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. It is, therefore, important that the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers. Support for these individuals will be provided for the school through as part of the Stay Safe programme and the ongoing OSPS education, which has a strong emphasis on the tolerance of difference and the development of self-esteem.

Details of the school's programme for working with pupils affected by bullying must be set out in the school's anti-bullying policy.

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.

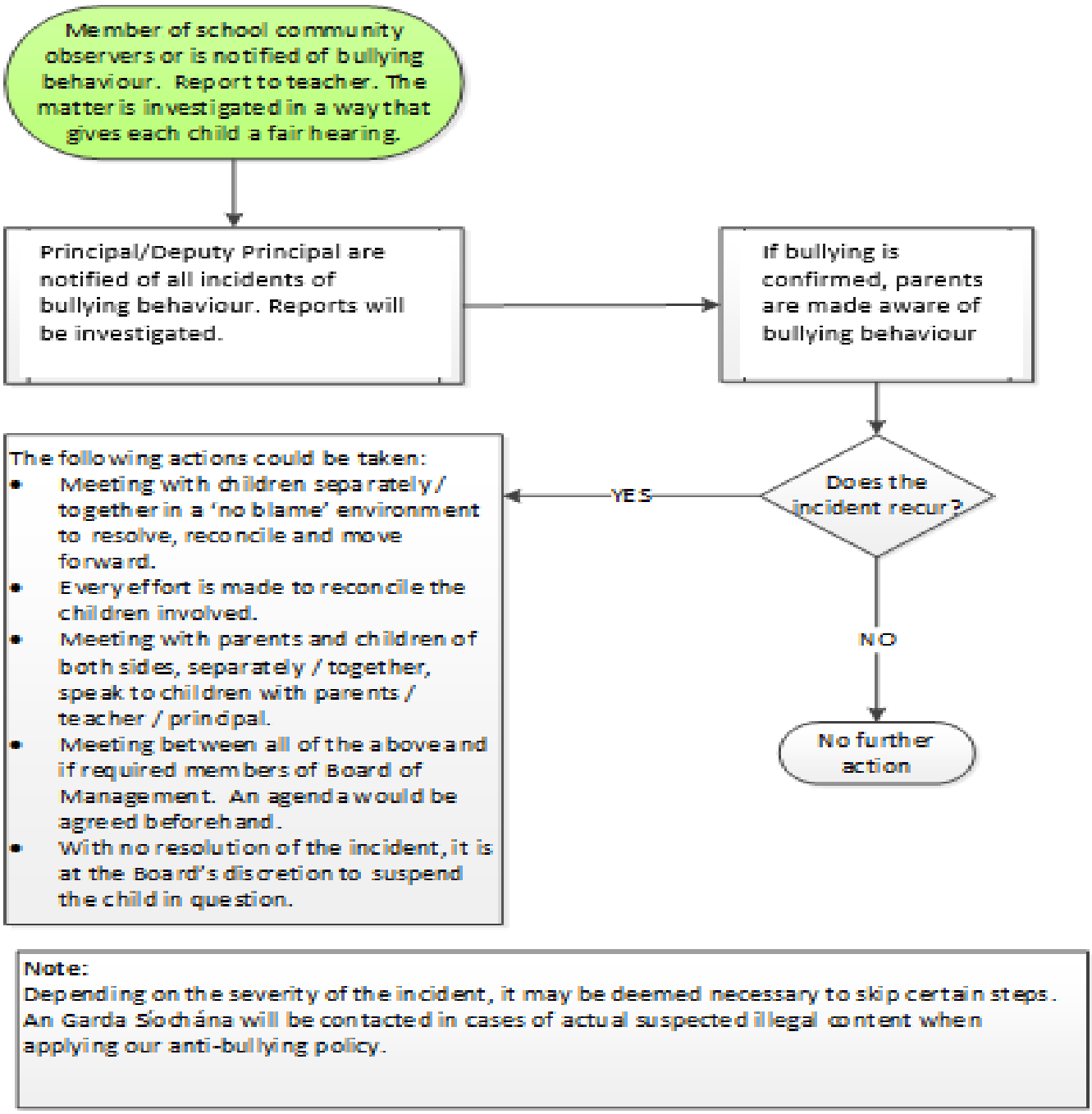
Prevention of Harassment

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.

Appendices

Appendix A – Procedures for bullying incidents

Whatever the situation we are dealing with, the bullied child (or adult) must be reassured of our support and we must deal with bullying behaviour in a strong and decisive manner.



Note:
Depending on the severity of the incident, it may be deemed necessary to skip certain steps. An Garda Síochána will be contacted in cases of actual suspected illegal content when applying our anti-bullying policy.

Appendix B – Form 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. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

7. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Appendix C – Form for recording suspected Bullying Behaviour

1. Name of pupil suspected of being harmed
Name _____Class_____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in suspected 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. Brief Description of suspected bullying behaviour and its impact

7. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Appendix D – What is Cyber-Bullying

There are many types of cyber-bullying. The more common types are:

1. Text messages – can be threatening or cause discomfort. Also included here is 'Bluejacking' (the sending of anonymous text messages over short distances using Bluetooth wireless technology)
2. Picture/video - clips via mobile phone cameras – images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed
3. Mobile phone calls – silent calls, abusive messages or stealing the victim's phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible
4. Emails – threatening or bullying emails, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else's name
5. Chat room bullying – menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web - based chat room
6. Instant messaging (IM) – unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real - time conversations online using MSM (Microsoft Messenger), Yahoo Chat or similar tools
7. Bullying via websites – use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal 'own web space' sites.

Appendix E – Anti-Bullying Committee

The anti-bullying committee will consist of a group of 2 teachers, 2 parents and one student from each class from 4th to 6th which should be rotated every term and a chairperson who will remain in place for the academic year for continuity. This group should meet monthly and provide proactive support to minimise bullying behaviour in the school. Such support could include initiatives such as poster competitions relating to bullying etc.

Appendix F – Useful Links

http://www.tacklebullying.ie/
http://www.digizen.org/parents/

Appendix G – Steps for Parents if they suspect their child is being bullied

1. Contact their teacher to let them know your concerns.
2. Allow a teacher time to conduct a investigation and gather facts.
3. After a teacher has conducted an investigation a report is made and if bullying is taking place the school will deliberate a course of action.
4. If no resolution is found or is unresolved it is escalated to the deputy principal or principal of the school
5. If you as a parent are not content with this you may wish to write to the schools board of management.
6. If no resolution is found or you are not happy with the course of action a school takes you may wish to contact the Ombudsman for children.

Appendix H – National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) – Restorative Justice

This NEPS Handout has been developed by educational psychologists and is based on current knowledge in this area. It is intended as a guide only. Not all the advice here may apply to any one student or situation. Teachers and parents may wish to identify the strategies that will work best for them. Restorative practice is based on the idea that the best way to help someone who has done wrong is to give them the opportunity to put things right. The outline presented here is based on the principles of restorative justice.

A mentor (this could be a class teacher, year head, student support team member etc.) meets separately with both the 'victim'/ 'harmed person' and the person who showed the challenging behaviour.
The following questions are asked:

- to the person showing challenging behaviour …
    1. what happened?
    2. What were you thinking at the time?
    3. What have your thoughts been since?
    4. Who has been affected by what you did?
    5. In what way have they been affected?
    6. What do you think needs to happen next?
- to the harmed person...
    1. What happened?
    2. What were your thoughts at the time?
    3. What have your thoughts been since?
    4. How has this affected you and others?
    5. What has been the hardest thing for you?
    6. What do you think needs to happen next?

Then both come together with the mentor who puts the same series of questions to them again (the earlier separate meetings are a practice and the mentor may have given support in structuring their thinking). The idea is that a workable solution or way of making up for the harm caused is agreed (and empathy is supported).

The practice says that 'why?' questions are unhelpful e.g. 'why did you....?'
For behaviour disruptions that are not serious but occur frequently and are annoying use Bill Rogers 4W Plan, which is also rooted in restorative justice.
The 4W Form asks the students to reply to the following questions:

1. What I did, was it against our class or school rules (my behaviour)
2. What rules (or rights) did I break or ignore?
3. What is my explanation?
4. What I think I should do to fix things up or work things out.

Important Note: Restorative Justice is known to work best where it is part of a whole school approach to discipline.

The following information is based on information provided by the Restorative Practices Ireland. This organisation can link your school to local trainers and further resources and support.
http://www.restorativepracticesireland.ie