



Meánscoil Iognáid Rís

Anti-Bullying Policy

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 Meánscoil Iognáid Rís 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 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.

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. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

Appropriate Year Head

Principal

Deputy Principal

5. The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

Creating a caring school community is one of the five key elements of an Edmund Rice school. The values of a Catholic school are taught and emphasised at all times and we inculcate respect for each individual from the first day of school.

The school has designed an Anti-Bullying Charter which is clear and uses child friendly language. It is displayed prominently in the school corridors and in every classroom. The principles of the Charter are taught to all students and are explained and discussed at Assemblies.

We have developed a cross curricular Anti-Bullying course which consists of 18 Anti-Bullying classes taught over 3 years to all junior classes. These classes are part of the curriculum for the following subject areas: Religion (RE), Physical Education (PE), Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE). The number of Anti-Bullying classes/year is as follows:

- *1st Year:* 3 SPHE, 1 PE, 2 RE, 1 CSPE
- *2nd Year:* 3 SPHE, 1PE, 2RE, 1CSPE
- *3rd Year:* 1PE, 2 RE, 1 CSPE

We run a Transfer Programme for incoming first years. This programme highlights Anti-Bullying issues and the principle of Respect for everybody.

We completed a survey of 174 Second Year students in May 2013 to assess the needs of the school in relation to bullying. The results of this survey have informed our policy and procedures.

Second Year CSPE classes will do an anti-bullying survey as a mini project each year. The results of this survey will be used to highlight the issue of bullying

Meitheal, a group of senior students, will continue to work with first years to introduce them to the values of the school and be available as someone to 'tell'. Meitheal students are also present on the corridors of the school and are always willing to monitor behaviour and to intervene when necessary.

All students are encouraged to come to any member of staff if they need support.

Art and Essay Competitions are held regularly to raise awareness of the problem of bullying. Prizes are awarded and the posters displayed in the Assembly Area and the school corridors. There is also an Anti-Bullying class for all students each year to increase awareness and to teach the students to treat everybody with respect.

Form Teachers form a strong relationship with their Form Class which creates a safe forum for discussion of the issues relating to bullying behaviour.

On the Anti-Bullying Charter there is an email address, support@naascbs.ie, which can be used by any student at any time to report issues that are causing them concern.

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 are as follows (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools) :

Note: The primary aim of these procedures is to resolve any issues and restore relationships rather than apportion blame.

The Meitheal group will report any bullying behaviour that they have seen, or that has been reported to them, to their Contact Teacher. The Contact Teacher will then report to the Year Head concerned.

When a possible bullying incident is reported to a staff member or when a staff member notices such behaviour an Anti-Bullying Record Form is completed and given to the relevant Year Head. This form has been emailed to all staff and is available on the shared drive

The Year Head then investigates the incident, interviewing both parties separately. A written record of these interviews will be made and stored. The interviews will be solution focused and will aim to get the inappropriate behaviour to stop immediately. The Year Head will use their professional judgement to ascertain whether or not bullying has occurred.

Reports of bullying will be stored in a confidential file in the Year Head's office.

When appropriate a meeting will be arranged between the students concerned to facilitate reconciliation.

If it is deemed that bullying has occurred both parties may be referred to the Counselling staff and parents of both parties will be informed by the Year Head.

In the case of a very serious incident the students involved will be brought directly to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

If bullying behaviour is repeated following intervention the parents of both parties will be asked to come to the school to discuss and help to resolve the problem.

Sanctions such as Friday and Saturday detentions or suspension may be applied as appropriate.

In cases where the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after it has been determined that bullying has occurred the template provided (appendix 3) must be completed and referred to the Principal.

Serious cases of bullying will be reported to the HSE, Family Social Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

We have a cross curricular anti-bullying team who will review procedures and practice regularly and develop new strategies when necessary.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools) :

Each class group has a Form Teacher who has a pastoral care role and is available to support students who experience difficulty.

The role of Year Head also has a strong pastoral care dimension. The Year head is a point of contact between the students, teaching staff and the parents.

Meitheal students will be available to counsel and support students affected by bullying.

The email address support@naascbs.ie can be used by students to access support

We have a 'Check In' Programme for students who need some help. The student meets a designated teacher once a week to discuss and try to resolve any problems.

We run a 'Friends for Life' programme for those affected by issues such as bullying. This excellent programme builds resilience and coping skills.

We have an experienced Guidance and Counselling team who will help and support students who experience difficulty. When Bullying is deemed to have occurred both the students who have been bullied and those who have bullied may be referred to the Counselling staff.

The school employs an experienced Psychotherapist who is available to deal with issues relating to bullying.

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. 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.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____
11. 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.
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 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.

Signed: Sean Feely
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Ben Travers
(Principal)

Date: 10/4/2014

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Date of next review: October 2015