

Meánscoil Iognáid Rís,
Nás na Rí,
Co. Chill Dara.



Tel: (045) 866402
Fax: (045) 881580
Email: admin@naascbs.ie
Web: www.naascbs.ie

Principal: Mr. B. Travers
Deputy Principals: Mr. L. Murphy
Ms. S. Power
Mr. R. Purcell

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

School Name: Meánscoil Iognáid Rís

School Address: Corban's Lane, Naas

School Details: Meánscoil Iognáid Rís is an all-boys Catholic voluntary secondary school under the Trusteeship of the *Edmund Rice Schools Trust*, formerly the Irish Christian Brothers. The school is named after the founder of the Order, Edmund Rice.

School Management: The Board of Management of Meánscoil Iognáid Rís is a statutory Board appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

MISSION STATEMENT

Inspired by its founder, Meánscoil Iognáid Rís aims to provide Catholic education in the Edmund Rice tradition. The school endeavours to be a caring Christian Community which promotes to the best of its ability the personal, spiritual, physical and intellectual development of its students

ETHOS

As an Edmund Rice School, Meánscoil Iognáid Rís seeks to promote the five key elements of an Edmund Rice School as espoused by the ERST Charter:

- Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values
- Promoting partnership in the school community
- Excelling in teaching and learning
- Creating a caring school community
- Inspiring transformational leadership.

Board of Management	Ratified 14th December 2023	To be reviewed 14th December 2024
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Review Dates: This policy will be reviewed annually

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 diversity and is based on inclusivity.
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents that concern them in a non-threatening environment.
 - identifies students who may be vulnerable and works to empower them within their peer group.
 - 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.
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.

 - Effective supervision and monitoring of students.
 - Supports for staff.
 - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies).
 - 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.
- 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 Principals**
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 student-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 is taught through the subjects that make up the Wellbeing Programme: Physical Education (PE) , Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) and Guidance. Cyberbullying and digital citizenship are addressed through our computer and coding classes. The number of Anti-Bullying classes in each year group is as follows:

- 1st Year: 4 SPHE, 1 PE, 1 Guidance, 1 CSPE
- 2nd Year: 4 SPHE, 1PE, 1 CSPE
- 3rd Year: 3 SPHE, 1PE, 1 CSPE

The Senior Cycle Wellbeing programme delivers one lesson per year relating to LGBTI+ Awareness and Inclusion to coincide with Stand Up Awareness Week. This lesson highlights the effects of harmful language, hate speech and bullying in the LGBTI+ community.

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. In 2017, an additional survey was conducted with our second year students. In 2021, a number of focus groups were held with second year students and students from the Meitheal team in sixth year. The results of these surveys and focus groups inform our policy and procedures. In 2023, a number of focus groups were held with first year and fourth year students to ensure they were aware of all strategies present in the Anti-Bullying policy.

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 report any incidents of concern to their Contact Teacher.

All students are encouraged to come to any member of staff if they need support. The school recognises the reluctance of students to report bullying. The ESRI, Growing up in Ireland (2009), survey found that only 23% of 10-year olds who were bullied told their parents. A figure of 15% has been reported for older students (Card & Hodges, 2008). We therefore need to go further than encouraging students to report by putting in place preventative measures and conditions that make it safe for students to tell. We recognise that many bullied students feel powerless. This power imbalance causes them to suffer fear of reprisals should they tell. We try to focus on empowering these students. To this end we have adopted the Helping Hands Wellbeing and Anti-Bullying Programme to be trialled with first year students.

To safeguard student welfare, various confidential questionnaires are conducted throughout the student year with first year students, to monitor and ensure student wellbeing, inclusion, and psychological safety. They are also used to ensure bullying can be reported in a safe and secure manner. We may use approved third party software to facilitate the process.

Attention is also drawn to our 'Classroom Rules' posters which are located in every classroom to increase awareness and to teach the students to treat everybody with respect. Guest speakers are organised every year to explore various issues which face students today and at the core of these talks are discussions around treating everyone fairly and with respect.

Form Teachers establish a strong relationship with their Form Class which creates a safe forum for the discussion of 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. This email address is linked to the principal's email address and provides an additional pathway for students to report issues of 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 for both the student who has experienced bullying and the student who displayed bullying behaviour.

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

When an incident of concern is reported to a staff member or when a staff member notices such an incident, a written/ email report is completed and forwarded to the relevant Year Head. This report outlines the incident or what has been reported to the teacher in a factual and impartial manner.

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 based on the definition of bullying outlined in Section 3 of this policy.

Reports of incidents of concern and records from follow-up interviews will be stored digitally in a confidential file in the appropriate Year Head's Google Drive. If a report has been emailed from a teacher /parent to the Year Head then this is stored in the Year Head's email. Any written reports presented as hard copies are stored securely in the locked Year Head office. Occasionally hard copies of working documents may be required while dealing with an issue. These documents will also be stored securely in the locked Year Head's office. Records will be retained in line with the school's Data Protection Policy.

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 continues following intervention the parents of both parties will be asked to come to the school to discuss and help to resolve the problem except where it is deemed not to be in the best interest of the student.

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, TUSLA and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

We have an anti-bullying team made up of senior management and Year Heads who will review procedures and practice regularly. This team will report back to the whole-school staff as necessary. All members of staff are welcome to suggest and develop new initiatives to complement existing procedures.

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.

If bullying has occurred, both the student who has been bullied and the student who has displayed bullying behaviour will be supported. Recommendations will be made as to how both students can move forward.

The Year Head may assign a Link Person (on a voluntary basis) during the follow-up process after an incident of bullying to check in with and support a student. Ideally, this is a subject teacher who sees the student on a regular basis and who can carry this out in an informal fashion. This Link Person will report any issues of concern to the Year Head. Meitheal students will also be available to support students affected by bullying.

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

The 'Friends for Life' programme has been incorporated into the 1st Year Guidance programme and is useful 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 student who has been bullied and those who have displayed the bullying behaviour 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 in April 2014 and is reviewed annually.

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. The policy has been discussed with the Student Council and posters throughout the school communicate important aspects of the policy to all students in student friendly language.

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.

Please see our Wellbeing policy on the school website for further related information.

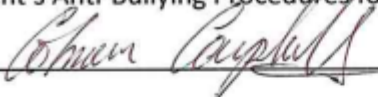
Notification of the Board of Management's annual review of the Anti-Bullying Policy

To: The School Community

The Board of Management of Meánscoil Iognáid Rís wishes to inform you that:

o The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of 14th December '23.

o This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix 4 of the Department's Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Signed  Date 14.12.2023

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed  Date 14/12/23

Principal

Appendix 3 Template 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))*

School Yard	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

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6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

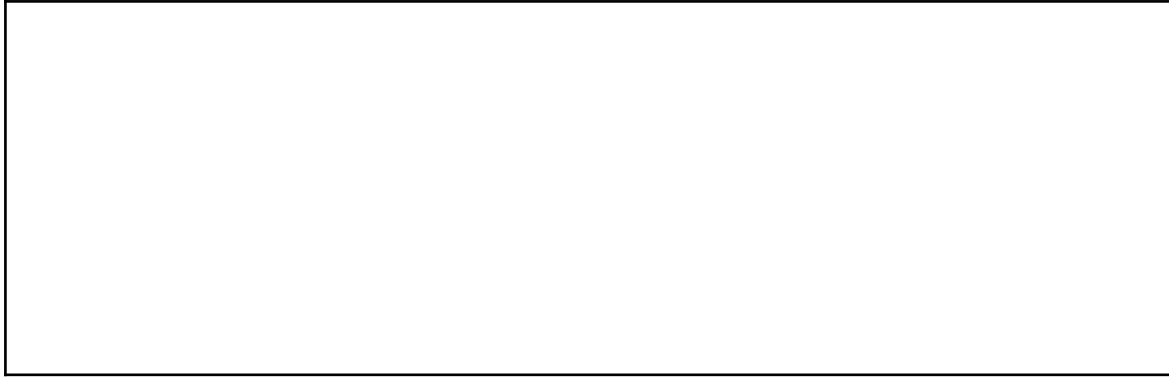
7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Details of actions taken



Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____