

Polasaí Fríth-Bhulaíochta Anti-Bullying Policy



Reviewed by staff:

Ratified by BOG::

Due for Review:

School Ethos and Preventative Curriculum

In Gaelscoil Aodha Rua, we aim to foster a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all of our staff, pupils and parents. We want our school to be a happy place of learning, which we all cherish and are proud of and where all members of our school community feel valued and cared for. We strive to ensure that all children are aware that their welfare, well-being and safety are our primary concern and that we are privileged to have been entrusted with them in our care. We celebrate diversity in our school and we encourage our pupils to share in each other's successes and to support each other's learning and development where possible. We believe that we can prevent bullying by fostering positive relationships at all levels throughout the school and by encouraging staff and parents to act as good role-models for our children. We believe that by being firm and consistent in our approach to bullying behaviour, we can lessen the impact of bullying on the victim and deter those who carry out bullying behaviour from repeating their behaviour.

Policy Statement

This policy will provide guidance for all staff, parents and carers on the school's approach to Bullying / Bullying Behaviour.

In Gaelscoil Aodha Rua, we believe that all children have the right to learn in an environment which is free from annoyance, intimidation, fear and harassment.

Bullying is contrary to the ethos and culture of our school and will not be tolerated.

All incidences of bullying will be acted upon and responded to effectively.

Guidance

In devising this policy, we used the following documents:
'Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour' – NIABF
'Pastoral Care in Schools' - DENI 1999

Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- Foster a secure and happy environment free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour.
- Inform children and parents of the school's expectations regarding behaviour and to foster a productive partnership, which helps maintain a bully-free environment
- Ensure all members of our school community – staff, pupils and parents - have an understanding of what bullying is, and what they should do if bullying arises
- Create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour
- Promote a 'whole school' approach, where signs of bullying are identified, and swift and effective action is taken
- Show commitment to overcoming bullying by practicing zero tolerance
- Assure pupils and parents that they will be supported when bullying is reported
- Assist in the provision of a positive and supportive atmosphere - for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour
- To develop procedures for noting, reporting and responding to incidents of bullying behaviour.

Definitions of Bullying

Bullying behaviour is defined as:

“deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend themselves.”

(DENI 1999 ‘Pastoral Care in Schools’ p63)

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) defines bullying as:

“the repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights or needs of another or others.”

(NIABF ‘Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour’)

- Bullying can take place between pupils, between pupils and staff, between staff, by individuals or groups; face to face; indirectly or using a range of cyber-bullying methods.
- It includes actions that cause physical, emotional or mental hurt to the victim and actions that violate another person’s freedom and rights.
- Bullying is an abuse of power where the person/s being bullied find it difficult to reject or deal with the offending behaviour or those involved in the bullying behaviour have power over the target of the bullying behaviour. Some power imbalances can be subtle or build up over time, but more common examples include that they are bigger/stronger/older; have more acquaintances/friends; are more established in the school or simply care less about the consequences of their actions.
- Bullying thrives on secrecy, the reluctance of the target to talk about it and the neglect of responsible adults to acknowledge its existence.

Terminology

In line with guidance from NIABF, we will use the following terms to describe children involved in incidents where an allegation of bullying has been made:

The term ‘victim’ will not be used to describe child who has been the target of bullying behaviour. Instead we will use the term **‘child who has been bullied’** or **‘the target of bullying behaviour’**.

We will not use the term ‘bully’ to describe the child who has been accused of bullying, as this tends to label the child and not the behaviour. Instead, we will use the term **‘the child who is displaying bullying behaviour’**.

Forms of Bullying

Physical Bullying

- hitting; pushing; kicking; tripping; spitting; hair pulling; throwing things.
- Interfering with another’s property by stealing/hiding/damaging/intruding upon it;
- extortion/threatening demands for money or other items
- writing or drawing offensive notes/graffiti about another

Verbal Bullying

- name calling; insulting or offensive remarks; accusing; taunting; put downs
- ridiculing another’s appearance/way of speaking / disability / personal mannerisms / race / colour / religion; humiliating another publicly
- spreading malicious or nasty rumours; threatening; intimidation; mocking; sarcasm

Emotional Bullying

- excluding/shunning others from group activity/ social setting or play;

- belittling another's abilities or achievements; mobbing the individual
- menacing looks, stares, rude signs or gestures; negative body language

Cyber Bullying

- misuse of e-mails, images, text, blogs, tweets, forums and chat rooms to hurt, embarrass, demean, harass, provoke or humiliate another using perceived anonymity
- misuse of mobile phones by text messaging/ calls or images – again to hurt, embarrass, demean, harass, provoke or humiliate another using perceived anonymity
- unauthorised publication or manipulation of private information; impersonation

Signs of stress in pupils which may indicate bullying:

- child's unwillingness to attend school/ lateness/ erratic attendance
- avoidance, hanging back from playground or staying late at school
- deterioration of work / 'mislaid' books, money, equipment or belongings / under achievement
- spurious illness / non-specific pains, headaches, tummy upsets, withdrawn, loss of appetite
- nail biting/ flinching/ jumpiness/ forgetfulness/ distractibility / impulsive hitting out/ out of character temper 'flare up' or restlessness/ sudden aggressiveness
- stresses manifested at home – bed wetting / insomnia / nightmares / restlessness and irritability
- reluctance to sit beside or near certain pupils/ hesitant to walk home

NB: Whilst these behaviours may also be symptomatic of other problems pertaining to Child Protection – bullying may be one reason!

Roles and Responsibilities

The Responsibilities of Staff

Our staff will:

- foster in our pupils: self-confidence, self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others;
- demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils;
- discuss bullying with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is the target of the bullying behaviour and to the child displaying the bullying behaviour, and the importance of telling an adult about bullying when it happens;
- be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying;
- listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously, record, and act to support and protect them;
- talk with the child accused of bullying behaviour to determine the nature of bullying;
- report suspected cases of bullying to the Principal or our Designated Teacher for Child Protection
- follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken;
- deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.

The Responsibilities of Pupils

We expect our pupils to:

- value and respect others and their unique traits and talents

- keep others safe
- follow school rules and class code agreements;
- refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity;
- intervene to protect the pupil who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so;
- report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances;
- help create a climate where bullying is not accepted;

Anyone who becomes the target of bullying behaviour should:

- not suffer in silence – trust that the school staff will help you
- be brave and have the courage to speak out – not only to put an end to your own suffering and but that of other potential targets.

What Pupils Need To Recognise About Bullying:

Pupils need to understand:

- that they have a right not be bullied at school;
- that they are not to blame if they are bullied;
- that they need to speak out and should trust the teachers to take their concerns seriously and to help them;

The Responsibilities of Parents

We ask parents to support their children and the school by:

- encouraging their children to speak openly about bullying – if they themselves are involved or if they witness it happening to someone else.
- watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying;
- advising their children to report any bullying to their class teacher and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils;
- advising their children not to retaliate violently to any form of bullying;
- being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken;
- keeping a written record of any reported instances of bullying;
- informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved;
- co-operating with the school, if their child / children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth, and point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.

The Responsibilities Of All:

Everyone should work together to create a safe, happy and anti-bullying environment within our school. We will beat bullying together!

Preventative Measures to create an Anti-Bullying Ethos

- Proactive Strategies
- promote school ethos at all times (as regards bullying – be a telling / listening / responding school)
- awareness of rights and responsibilities of all staff and pupils to work and learn in a happy, safe, secure school

- hold school assemblies – addressing bullying and providing anti-bullying strategies
- vigilant supervision in the playground / general school environment
- use of PDMU lessons / circle time
- use of peer support in playground - KS2 buddy system
- use of social stories during literacy / PDMU lessons
- awareness & celebration of anti-bullying week (in November each year)
- use of outside agencies for workshops / training – NSPCC, Childline, Behaviour Support Team
- staff training / effective communication
- use of creative learning to enhance social and emotional skills
- consultation and questionnaires with all stakeholders (staff, parents and pupils) on perceptions of anti-bullying ethos within the school

Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour

The following steps will be taken when dealing with incidents involving bullying behaviour:

- if bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached
- attempts will be made to resolve situation quickly
- reports will be taken seriously
- steps will be taken to ensure child feels safe and secure
- significant incidents will involve further investigation and recording
- a clear account will be reported to the principal / vice principal / class teacher / designated teacher for child protection
- significant or repeated incidents will require parents to be informed
- disciplinary measures / sanctions, which are proportionate, will be explained and used

EFFECTIVE RESPONSES TO BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

STEP 1

REPORTING OF AN INCIDENT (significant/repeated/intentional incidents or serious one-off incident)

When such a bullying incident is reported, the information will be passed on to following people:

The teacher of any child involved

The Principal

The designated teacher for Child Protection

STEP 2

INVESTIGATION OF AN INCIDENT

This will normally be carried out by the Designated Teacher for child protection, in co-operation with the class teacher / adults involved

Pupils involved will be interviewed and a record made of their responses using the school's incident report form.

The level of severity, frequency and duration of the bullying behaviour will be assessed, as well as the effect of the behaviour on the target of the bullying behaviour, in accordance with the level 1-4 descriptions provided by NIABF.

Parents of all pupils involved will be informed of the school's action up to this point and kept informed of subsequent action

STEP 3

AGREEING A PLAN FOR RESOLUTION

Designated teacher will devise a plan for resolution of conflict

concerned

Any disciplinary action required will use system of sanctions as set out in the school's

Discipline Policy/ Positive Behaviour Policy

Parents of both children will be informed of the details of the planned resolution and permission sought to involve any external agencies.

Parents will also be given advice on how to support their child at home and directed to online resources / external agencies for guidance.

STEP 4

REVIEWING THE SITUATION

Situation monitored and formally reviewed within one month of initial report

This will involve designated teacher, class teacher, staff community, pupils and parents concerned.

STEP 5

INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER AGENCIES

Where necessary the school will draw on support of Education Welfare Officer, Behaviour Management Team, Educational Psychology Service

Record Keeping

The school will make use of the resources provided by the NIABF for recording, investigating and responding to incidents of a bullying nature. All records of incidents of a bullying nature will be held in a confidential file in the principal's office.

Pastoral Support

At all times, pupils who are the targets of bullying behaviour will be reassured that they are not in any way to blame. Support and protection will be given by all staff involved with the child. The child will be monitored closely and reassured that the school will act to avoid any further incidents of bullying towards them.

A child who has been involved in bullying behaviour will be expected to take responsibility for their actions. The reasons for their behaviour will be explored and they will be expected to improve and change. They will be encouraged to think and talk about the implications of their behaviour for the pupil who was their target. Discussion should also involve the pupils' parents to identify any relevant background information and to secure their support. It may also be necessary for the involvement of the SENCO to address any behavioural problems through a behavioural programme. The aim will be to resolve incidents, rebuild relationships and restore a safe environment for all. Incidents will be resolved in age-appropriate ways and any sanctions will be in line with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy.

External Agencies

Support from external agencies such as the Behaviour Support Team, Pupil Development Service, RISE (ACE) and Family Support Hub may also be enlisted.

Resources and Training

The principal, in conjunction with the designated teacher for Child Protection will ensure that all staff are familiar with this policy, with the NIABF materials and that training of staff is arranged and updated as necessary. Material resources / sub-cover costs for external training will be budgeted for accordingly.

Monitoring and Review of Anti-Bullying policy

Implementation of this policy will be monitored by the principal and designated teacher for child protection. This policy will be formally evaluated and reviewed with the whole staff every 2 years

Consultation and valuable input will be sought from the whole school community, including staff, parents / carers and pupils.