



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 Scoil Naomh Fiachra, Illistrin 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.

Children First National Guidance 2017 and the Anti-Bullying Procedures provide that in cases of serious instances of bullying where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, a referral may need to be made to Tusla or An Garda Síochána as appropriate. Where school personnel have concerns about a child arising from alleged bullying behaviour but are not sure whether to report the matter to TUSLA, the designated liaison person shall seek advice from Tusla in accordance with the procedures set out in Chapter 5 of Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.

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:

- Creating 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.
- 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 that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.

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- 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).
- 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. A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with this policy. However, the relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are the class teachers with the support of the Principal teacher and Deputy Principal as necessary. Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances are appropriate. The relevant teachers in this school are the Principal Teacher, Deputy Principal Teacher, S.P.H.E. co-ordinator, the class teacher & the SEN/EAL teacher.

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5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

- Full implementation of the SPHE, RSE & Stay Safe programmes and curricula to ensure that school culture supports a safe social and personal environment. Training for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide training on bullying (to include all school personnel, students and parents and wider community).
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying
- Training for teachers on: resolving bullying; internet safety and cyber bullying; sexual orientation and homophobia
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures. For example: annual Anti - Bullying/Friendship Week and parent seminars; student surveys.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school - a copy to be given to all new parents and displayed on the school website and displayed publicly in school.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Encourage of the student council to become involved in contributing to a safe school environment. Buddy and other student support activities can help to support vulnerable children, and encourage a culture of peer support.
- Ensuring that students know who to tell and how to tell, e.g:

-Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time.

-Hand note up with homework or place in Circle-Time box (Bubble/Worry Box).

-Make contact with a trusted teacher in the school.

-Get a parent or friend to tell on your behalf.

- During the school's open day for new parents, the principal will speak about bullying:

-the standards of behaviour expected from children in the school.

-what action the parents should take if their child is being bullied.

What action the parents should take if told that their child has engaged in bullying behaviour.

- Pupils' anti-bullying posters are displayed throughout the school.

- Puppet shows are invited periodically to help deliver the school's message on bullying.
- Teachers encourage all children to take part in group work, games and sports.

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:

Procedures for investigating Bullying

- Teachers respond sensitively to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying and investigate all disclosed incidents of bullying.
- Answers will be sought to the questions of what, where, when, who and why.
- Investigation is usually carried out outside the classroom to ensure confidentiality and to avoid humiliation.
- If a group of children are involved, it is normal practice to first interview each one individually. Then the group as a whole meets and each member is asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said.
- Pupils who are not directly involved may be asked for information if deemed appropriate.
- If a child reports electronic bullying, parents are informed.

Responding to Bullying

If it is determined that bullying has occurred, it is dealt with as circumstances require:

- Support will be provided for anyone who is bullied by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about their experience with their teacher or other teacher along with continuing support when they feel they need it. A victim will be assured that the school community will help them and put monitoring procedures in place to safeguard them.
- In all serious incidents parents of the victim are informed.
- Help and support will also be sought for the bully. This will include speaking to them to discover why they became involved. The bully will be helped see things from the victim's point of view. In serious cases (determined jointly by the teacher and principal) parents are informed. The school's Code of Behaviour applies and if necessary appropriate sanctions are enforced (e.g. loss of privilege, make good any damage or loss). The aim of all intervention is to modify the bully's behaviour and to prevent reoccurrence. If necessary outside agencies e.g. NEPS, Garda JLO, etc will be asked to supply support.

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- Incidents of bullying will be used as opportunities for reinforcing the Anti-Bullying policy of the school. Follow up meetings may be arranged as appropriate to assess progress and/or restore relationships. In all cases every effort is made for all parties to learn from the experience and to move on from it.
- All serious incidents of bullying (according to the definition) are reported to the principal or deputy principal.

Recording of Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management must ensure that the school has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour. All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour must adhere to the following:

A.

While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.

B.

If it is established by the teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

C.

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- In cases where s/he considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after s/he has determined that bullying behaviour occurred.
- Where the school has decided as part of its antibullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

See Template in Appendix 3: DES Procedures.

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7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- Individual counselling for students where appropriate.
- Group work such as circle time where appropriate.

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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 20th September 2023.

10. 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.

11. 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: _____

Fr Kevin Gillespie, Chairperson, Board of Management.

26th September 2024

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