Scoil Ruáin 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 Ruáin 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 the use of established intervention strategies);

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 teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools

•   All staff (including non-teaching staff) will actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.⌷ A student or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. A teacher or staff member who witnesses bullying behaviour or to whom bullying has been reported will inform the relevant Year Head who will investigate the matter to ascertain if it is a bullying incident.⌷

•   The Year Head may decide to involve the Guidance Counsellor, the HSCL, the SCP and SEN Teacher or RSE as appropriate.

•   The Year Head may seek advice from the principal or deputy principal as applicable at any stage in the investigations. The Year Head may decide at any

stage to pass the matter on to the principal or deputy principal as applicable if he/she deems it appropriate to do so.

•   In the absence of the Year Head the matter should be reported directly to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

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 (see Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):**

•   SPHE programme promoting self-esteem and personal social skills.

•   CSPE programme on Human Dignity of all, including those with disabilities.

•   RSE programme for senior students

•   In every classroom teachers will (a) use teaching methodologies that allow students to flourish and achieve to their potential thereby promoting their self-esteem and self-confidence and (b) foster an attitude of respect for all. Issues such as discrimination, homelessness, homosexuality, peer abuse, rights and responsibilities, human rights, prejudice, stereotyping, immigration, refugees, asylum seekers, etc, will be addressed and dealt with sensitively in all classrooms. Certain subjects, such as Irish, English, Art, Drama, History, Geography, Environmental and Social Studies, CSPE, SPHE and Religion in particular, give scope for these issues to be addressed in more depth with a view to promoting inclusivity, tolerance and understanding.

•   The Pastoral Care Structure – Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head, Class Teacher, Guidance Counsellor, Home School Community Liaison teacher, School Completion Programme, Special Needs Assistants, Assistant Principals and Senior Student Mentoring Programme for First Years – provides a formal support structure for all students who experience bullying of any type.

•   The Senior Student Mentoring Programme for First Years provides social and emotional support for First Year students who may be experiencing difficulties including bullying.

•   Sensitive, appropriate and effective responses to all claims of bullying incidents, including anonymous claims, will promote the culture of Scoil Ruáin as a 'telling school'.

- The Scoil Ruáin Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), Scoil Ruáin Mobile Phone Policy and Scoil Ruáin Ipad Contract[1] are also concerned with preventing the misuse of ICT and the internet among students of Scoil Ruáin and should be regarded as supporting policies to the Scoil Ruáin Anti-Bullying Policy. These policies must be signed by students and their parents/guardians.

- Extra-curricular activities that promote self-esteem and self-confidence and encourage students to become active members of the school community (Gaelic games, Basketball, Soccer, Student Council, Book Club, Drama Club, Cinema Club, Photography Club, Equestrian, Golf, School Musical, 5K Fun Run/Walk, BT Young Scientist, Athletics, etc.) are encouraged and supported by management and staff of Scoil Ruáin.

- Presentations by organisations such as Humourfit Theater Company and Child Watch will be organized regularly to raise awareness of identity-based bullying, cyber safety, cyberbullying and responsible use of the internet/social media for both students and parents.

- Posters on identity-based bullying, cybersafety, cyberbullying and information on websites such as reachout.com, webwise.ie and internetsafety.ie, spunout.ie and lgbt.ie will be displayed in the school.

- Information Leaflets by the Office for Internet Safety (OIS) on cyberbullying will be made available to parents and students.

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):**

Procedures for investigation, follow-up, recording and dealing with bullying:

- The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;

• All reports, including anonymous reports, of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly;

• Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

• Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;

• Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;

• Incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;

• All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;

• When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;

• If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;

• It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);

• In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give

parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils;

• Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;

• It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school;

• Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.

• In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template. (See Appendix 2)

• In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:

o Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;

o Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;

o Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and

o Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;

• Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;

• In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

• 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 judgment in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;

• If it is established by the relevant 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.

• **The relevant teacher must use the recording template (Appendix 2) to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:** ⌷SEP⌷

(a) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and ⌷SEP⌷

(b) if the relevant teacher considers the bullying behaviour to be of a very serious   nature it must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. ⌷SEP⌷

• In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. (The timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template does not preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable at an earlier stage in relation to a case.)

• In some cases behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. In such cases the matter should be referred to the principal/deputy principal as applicable who will deal with it within the framework of the overall Code of Behaviour.

• In cases where management has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) will be sought.

• 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 Health Service Executive (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 will, in accordance with the Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

• If there is uncertainty about whether or not to report a matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) or Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLP) as applicable will seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

Established evidence based intervention strategies for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour and preventing its continuation:

• The following intervention methods will be used to deal with cases of bullying and prevent its continuation:

-Mediation – adult.

-The Traditional Disciplinary Approach

• The type of intervention used will be decided by taking into account (a) the nature of the bullying (b) the severity of the bullying, (c) whether there is individual or group involvement, (d) the age and cognitive ability of the students concerned and (e) the level of training and skill that teachers have in applying the chosen method.

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):**

• Subject to the availability of resources and following consultation with parents/ NEPS the school will provide access to counselling if required.

• Students who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

• Students who observe bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss this behaviour with their teachers.

• The Year Head and Class Teacher will monitor progress, meeting with the student(s) formally and informally, to ensure that the bullying has ceased.

• The Year Head will encourage parents to maintain contact with school.

• The Year Head and Pastoral Care team will encourage membership of clubs, societies and other extra-curricular activities in order to promote self-esteem, build confidence and improve social skills.

• CSPE, SPHE and RSE Programmes are available for all students.

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 DES 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 of Education and Skills.

Signed: (Chairperson of Board of Management)_____

Date:_____ SEP

Date of next review: _____

Signed: (Principal) _____

Date:

Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

1.   Name of student being bullied and class group:

Name: _____ Class: _____

2.   Name(s) and class(es) of student(s) engaged in bullying behaviour:

_____
_____
_____
_____

3.   **Source of bullying concern/report (please tick)**

- Student concerned
- Other student
- Parent
- Teacher
- Non teaching member of staff
- Other (specify)

4.   **Location of incident (please tick)**

- School yard
- Classroom
- Corridor
- Toilets
- School bus
- On school activity (specify)
- Other (specify)

5. **Name of person who reported the bullying concern**:

_____

6. **Type of Bullying behaviour (please tick)**

- Physical Aggression
- Damage to property
- Isolation/exclusion
- Cyberbullying

- Intimidation
- Malicious gossip
- Name calling
- Other (specify)

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

- Homophobic/transphobic
- Racist
- Membership of Traveller community
- Disability
- SEN

8. **Brief description of bullying behaviour and its impact:**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

9. **Details of actions taken:**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Signed: _____(Relevant teacher)   Date: _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal_____

Scoil Ruáin Anti-Bullying Policy - Links with other Policies and Curricula Requirements

Code of Behaviour: The Anti-Bullying Policy forms part of the overall school Code of Behaviour (in line with NEWB Guidelines, 2008) and the standards of behaviour that are outlined in the Code of Behaviour apply to the Anti-Bullying Policy of the school.

Child Protection: In accordance with DES Child Protection Procedures 2011; "in situations where the (bullying) incident is serious and when the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school should consult with the Health Service Executive (HSE) Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan". (DES Child Protection Procedures, 2011, 6.3.5)

In addition serious instances of bullying behaviour should be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services. (DES Child Protection Procedures, 2011, 6.3.5)

Acceptable Use Policy: The practices outlined in the Acceptable Use Policy for safe use of the Internet reflect the requirements of the anti-bullying procedures and must be adhered to at all times. This also applies to the use of other technological devices, including mobile phones, tables, digital cameras and other devices.

Data Protection Policy: All data in relation to bullying behaviour must be collected, processed, stored and used in accordance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003, (s.s. 2 & 3) An individual must be given a copy of his/her records on request. (s.3)

Equal Status Act 2000: The Anti-Bullying Policy includes an undertaking to 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.

Health and Safety Statement: The Anti-Bullying Policy outlines the key principles of best practice for preventing and tackling bullying behaviour.

Curricula Requirements - Implementation of the SPHE curriculum / RSE programmes Implementation of SPHE / RSE:

Circular Letter 23/2010 (Post Primary) "Social Personal and Health Education, Best Practice Guidelines" outline the approaches to the consistent implementation of the SPHE curriculum including RSE.

Circular Letter 37/2010 (Post Primary) 'Relationships and Sexuality Education' outlines the obligations of Post Primary schools to:

•   develop a school policy in regard to Relationships and Sexuality Education; and

•   implement a programme in this area as an element of Social Personal and Health Education at junior cycle, and as an RSE programme in senior cycle.