



## Scoil Ruáin



## Anti-Bullying Policy



Policy Area	Schools
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## **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 antibullying 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. Core Values**

Scoil Ruáin is a co-educational, multidenominational ETB school that is underpinned by the core values of excellence in education, care, equality, community, and respect. At Scoil Ruáin, we work hard to give every student an equal chance to participate in curricular and extracurricular activities, to prepare our students to be open-minded and responsible citizens with a strong sense of our core values. Everyone in our school community is treated equally in all aspects of school life. Our aim is to provide an inclusive education that acknowledges the variety of identities, viewpoints, and values that students, parents and staff members have.

3. 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 nonthreatening 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);

4. In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools bullying is defined as follows:

5. 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.

6. 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/SNA 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 class tutor 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.

7. 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):

- RSE-Anti-bullying programme for First Year students.
- SPHE programme promoting self-esteem and personal social skills, including Friends for Life programme in second year.
- CSPE programme on Human Dignity of all, including those with disabilities.

- 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 Student Support Structure — Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head, Class Teacher, Guidance Counsellor, Home School Community Liaison teacher, School Completion Programme, Special Needs Assistants, and Assistant Principals - provides a formal support structure for all students who experience bullying of any type.
  - 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) and Scoil Ruáin Mobile Phone Policy 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.
  - 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, School Musical, 5K Fun Run/walk, BT Young Scientist, Athletics, etc,) are encouraged and supported by management and staff of Scoil Ruáin.
  - Collecting feedback from staff and students concerning wellbeing and measures against bullying.
  - Participating in Stand-Up Awareness Week activities.
  - Presentations by organisations such as Zeeko, as well as teaching materials developed by webwise and BelongTo, will be used to raise awareness of identity-based bullying, cyber safety, cyberbullying and responsible use of the internet/social media for both students and parents.
  - Issues relating to cyber safety and internet/social media use will be addressed at information meetings for incoming students and their parents/guardians. Information Leaflets on cyberbullying will be made available to parents and students.
  - Training of school staff to recognise signs of bullying and how to respond to bullying and reporting on any issues.
8. 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: Bullying which occurs off the school premises and outside of school time when the student is not under the care or responsibility of the school.

Scoil Ruáin will deal with bullying which occurs off the school premises and outside of school time when the student is not in the lawful charge of the school only in extreme situations, i.e., when the actions of the alleged bully cause 'substantial disruption' to the school.

'Substantial disruption' is defined as:

- cessation of instruction
- inability of students or staff to focus
- the necessity of severe disciplinary measures
- an interference with the learning environment

This approach is in line with NEWB Guidelines which state that when a student is allegedly involved in 'serious misbehaviour outside school, when not under the care or responsibility of the school' there would have to be 'a clear connection with the school and a demonstrable impact on its work before the Code of Behaviour applies'.

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

- The primary aim for the relevant teacher (i.e., the Year Head) 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 year head, principal or deputy;
- 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;
- It may 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:
  - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
  - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
  - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
  - 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.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In Scoil Ruáin, written records should be kept of all investigations into reports of bullying.
- 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:

(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

(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.

- 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 (DDLDP) 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 — School staff member and students
- Restorative practice organised by Principal/Deputy Principal with both parties
- Traditional Disciplinary Approach (school sanctions as referred to in the Scoil Ruáin code of behaviour)

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.

9. 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 facilitate access to support if required.



- Students who engage in bullying behaviour may need support to help them to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others, e.g., retracking programme.
  - Students who observe bullying behaviour will be advised to seek support from 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 Student Support Team, HCSL, SCP, 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.
10. 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.
  11. 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.
  12. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_.
  13. 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.
  14. 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 DE.

Our school is dedicated to cultivating a safe and nurturing environment for all its members. In pursuit of this goal, we are committed to crafting a robust schoolwide policy to address and prevent bullying. During the academic year 2023/2024 we are committed to the following:

1. Fostering an Open Atmosphere: We strive to foster a climate in which students feel empowered to come forward and report incidents of bullying. Encouraging open dialogue will help us identify and address such behaviour effectively. Our Care Team and Student Support Team will enhance our communication and support students to disclose bullying incidents.
2. Raising Anti-Bullying Awareness: We recognise the importance of educating not only our students but also our teachers and parents about the negative impacts of bullying. Through awareness campaigns and educational initiatives, we aim to create a shared understanding of the importance of preventing bullying. Our Wellbeing Team will host a student led Wellbeing

Week and an Anti-Bullying Week in 2023-2024. We will also provide a print rich environment and create a Wellbeing-Antibullying Noticeboard in the hallway.

3. Establishing Consensus and Support: To ensure a consistent and effective response, we will disseminate our schoolwide Antibullying policy outlining clear procedures and support systems for dealing with bullying incidents. This policy will be available to staff, students, and all stakeholders.
4. Continuous Evaluation: Our commitment to eradicating bullying extends to regularly assessing the overall effectiveness of our anti-bullying initiatives. Our SPHE teachers will continue to engage in anti-bullying and online safety programmes such as FUSE, tacklebullying.ie and Stand Up. During the first term our Wellbeing team will survey students and staff on their experience of Wellbeing and Anti-bullying in Scoil Ruáin. The Wellbeing team will analyse the data received from students and review our strategies in accordance with the results.

#### **Goals for 2023/2024**

1. Survey students regarding their experience of wellbeing and bullying in Scoil Ruáin to identify areas that may need addressing.
2. Review policy with student council and parent representatives.
3. Members of wellbeing team will access training from PTSD/BelongTo.
4. Complete ISPCC/Shield self-evaluation tool to identify areas that may need addressing.
5. Wellbeing team will meet each term to review and plan interventions.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 2: 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:

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3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))

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

4. Location of incident (tick relevant box(es))

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 (tick relevant box(es))

Physical Aggression		Cyberbullying	
Damage to property		Intimidation	
Isolation/exclusion		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:

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9. Details of actions taken:

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Signed: (Relevant teacher)

Date:

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Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal:

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## **Appendix 4 Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation**

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day-to-day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies? Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

**Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy**

To: \_\_\_\_\_ The Board of Management of \_\_\_\_\_  
wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of \_\_\_\_\_ [date].
- 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 \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

## Scoil Ruáin Anti-Bullying Policy – Links with other Policies

Code of Behaviour	The Anti-Bullying Policy of the school 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 the DES Child Protection Procedures 201 1; “in situations where the (bullying) incident is serious and when the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school should consult with the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan”. (DES Child Protection Procedures, 201 1, 6.3.5). In addition, serious instances of bullying behaviour should be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services. (DES Child Protection Procedures, 201 1.
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, iPads, digital cameras and other devices.
Data Protection Acts, 1988 and 2003	All data in relation to bullying behaviour must be collected, processed, stored and used in accordance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003.
Health and Safety Statement	The Anti-Bullying Policy outlines the key principles of best practice for preventing and tackling bullying behaviour.
RSE policy	The RSE policy includes a statement on inclusivity re homophobic/transphobic bullying.
Curricula Requirements Implementation of the SPHE curriculum / RSE programmes	<p>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.</p> <p>Circular Letter 37/2010 (Post Primary) ‘Relationships and Sexuality Education’ outlines the obligations of Post Primary schools to:</p> <p><i>“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.”</i></p>
Student Support and Wellbeing Policy	The Student Support and Wellbeing policy outlines the roles of each member of staff in promoting a positive school atmosphere. Bullying is best dealt with by prevention. It is a protective factor to support students in becoming resilient, purposeful and connected.