



May 2023

## Anti Bullying Policy

### Introduction:

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 St. Brigid's Primary School, Moate 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. 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;

B. Effective leadership;

C. A school-wide approach;

D. A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;

E. Implementation of education and prevention strategies 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.

F. Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;

G. Supports for staff;

H. Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and

I. 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,
- verbal abuse,
- physical aggression,
- extortion,
- damage to property,
- intimidation,
- name calling,
- telephone calling, text messaging and 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*. (DES)



4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

The Principal / Deputy Principal and class teacher. Where appropriate other teachers will deal with bullying. In general, all staff members must be vigilant at all times, and have a duty to report suspected or potentially bullying behaviour.

5. The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:

- The school staff and Board of Management take several measures to curtail bullying.
- The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
- The school has a Code of Discipline, Mobile Phone Policy and Acceptable Use Policy in place.
- All staff members, parents and pupils must treat everyone with respect.
- The school community is organised in order to minimise opportunities for bullying.
- Supervision is sufficient at all times.
- New pupils are monitored as to how they are settling in.
- School personnel, parents and all pupils, are watchful.
- The school SPHE plan and especially the Stay Safe Programme address the issue of bullying.
- The staff address the issue of inappropriate sexual language, and its use as a bullying tool. Homophobic and transphobic bullying are unacceptable.
- Complaints are dealt with quickly, firmly and fairly, involving parents in the process where appropriate.
- The school has a firm and fair discipline structure.
- Pupils are encouraged to discuss how they get on with other people and to form positive attitudes towards other people. This includes work on friendship and what it really means.



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:

## **Procedure**

When a complaint of bullying is made or when bullying behaviour is observed the following procedure will be followed:

### **A – Reporting**

Any child may approach any member of staff at any time if they feel they are being bullied. Children should report to members of staff if they feel other children are being bullied. Parents should contact the school if they feel their child is being bullied or involved in bullying. Members of staff should approach the principal/chairperson if they feel they are being bullied.

### **B – Investigation**

The complaint will be investigated fully by interviewing the children named and any others who may be able to provide information. At all times they will be encouraged to discuss everything with their parents. Victim and perpetrator will be treated seriously and with fairness and compassion. All sides will be listened to. Parents may be informed at any stage. If considered necessary the Board of Management will be informed. A written record may be made and retained in the school files.

### **C – Outcome**

If the school authorities feel that there is evidence of bullying the following strategies will be used:

#### If the behaviour is not too serious and the staff have confidence that it may end -

The class teacher and principal or deputy principal will discuss the matter with both parties.

The perpetrator will be warned of the consequences should there be further bullying behaviour.

The situation will be monitored closely.

Parents may be informed.

#### If the behaviour is of a severe bullying nature or escalates, the situation becomes more serious, and some or all of the following sanctions may be applied:

- Continued reasoning with the pupil and advice on how to behave.
- Loss of various privileges.
- Parents may be requested to escort their child to and from school.



- In very serious cases it is within the power of the Board of Management to exclude a pupil for a period or ultimately to expel a pupil.

The school may seek assistance and advice from outside agencies if necessary, including National Educational Psychological Service, the National Educational Welfare Board and the HSE.

The aim of the school will always be reconciliation and resolution of conflict.

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

**Victim:** Those who have been subjected to bullying will be supported through the pastoral care structures in the school. Support will be provided for anyone who has been /is being bullied by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about their experience with their teacher or another teacher. A victim will be assured that the school community will help them and put monitoring procedures in place to safeguard them. Children have the opportunity to participate in social skills lessons designed to raise their self-esteem and to develop their friendship and social skills. The victims may have counselling provided by outside agencies.

**Perpetrator:** Those who have been found to have engaged in bullying will be encouraged to recognise the inappropriateness of such behaviour and the seriousness of its effects on others. Help and support will also be sought for the bully. This will include speaking to them to discover why they became involved. For those low in self-esteem, opportunities will be developed to increase feelings of self-worth through the SPHE programme. Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers. Pupils who engage in serious bullying behaviour may have counselling provided.

**Other:** Class lessons will be taught, mainly in S.P.H.E. dealing with respect, self-esteem and the issue of bullying. It is ensured that children know where to get help from - Children are assured that they may seek help from many sources – parents, school community and outside agencies.



**8. Bullying of School Personnel:** Bullying (in any form as described at Section 2 above) of school personnel by pupils, their parents/guardians or by colleagues, by means of physical assault, damage to property, verbal abuse, threats to their families or any form of intimidation will not be accepted, will be investigated, and will be acted upon.

See Health and Safety Statement for more detail of procedures

## **9. 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.

## **10. 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.

**11. Communication ;** 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.

## **12. Implementation:**

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. Following formulation in consultation with the Parents' Association and staff of the school, this policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014



This policy was further reviewed and rarified by B.O.M. on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016

This policy was last reviewed at B.O.M. meeting on 11th May 2023

Signed: Kevin Duffy  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 11/5/2023

Signed: Cathy Gillivan  
(Principal)

Date: 11/5/2023