



Scoil Mhuire Allenwood

Anti-bullying policy

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 Mhuire Allenwood 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.

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils. The school community believes strongly that respect for all at all times must be promoted and become intrinsic in the ethos of society.

The children are taught that society is made up of a variety of different people, all of whom deserve our respect, all of whom have the right to be treated equally and to have the fundamental right to be allowed to exist in society and be content in their lives. No bullying can therefore be tolerated and no discrimination based on the nine stated grounds included in equality legislation, i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community, can be allowed.

The Board of Management and the staff of Scoil Mhuire Allenwood are therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

A positive school culture and climate which –

1. is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 2. encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 3. 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-
 1. Builds empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 2. Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and trans phobic 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); and
 - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

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 Appendix A of this policy.

Who will deal with accusations of bullying?

As with all instances of misbehaviour in school, if there is an accusation of bullying in school, the class teacher (or the teacher on yard, if the incident occurs on yard) will investigate and deal with the incident in the first instance. The teacher on yard will discuss the incident with the child (ren)'s class teacher. The principal is then informed of the incident and the sanctions imposed.

If there is an acceptance that the behaviour constituted bullying, or the behaviour is repeated, the matter is brought to the attention of the principal. The principal will speak to all the children involved and the incident will be recorded on the 'Template for recording bullying behaviour' (Appendix B).

The principal will also contact the parents of all parties involved and address the issue with them and the class teacher.

Sanctions will be imposed in line with the school's behaviour policy but there may be some variation on the sanctions imposed depending on where the incident took place.

Stage 1: Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve

Stage 2: On the third reprimand the child should be separated from peers using a "time out" zone e.g. table or chair. The time period will depend on class level.

The following is suggested:

- Infants – not more than 5 minutes
- 1st/2nd – not more than 7 minutes
- 3rd/4th – not more than 10 minutes
- 5th/6th – not more than 15 minutes

*** In the case of more serious misbehaviour stages 1 & 2 may be skipped.**

Stage 3: Loss of privileges e.g. Golden Time, Activities, yard time, curricular areas under certain circumstances.

For a short period of time the child may be removed from their classroom and supervised by a neighbouring teacher during which time, written work may be given.

However, as bullying is considered a very serious offence in this school, time may also be spent in the principal's office.

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:

- The Stay Safe Programme
- SPHE
- RSE Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Circle time
- Anti-Bullying website

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:

- The Stay Safe Programme
- SPHE
- RSE Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Anti-Bullying website

The school will also work with the alleged bullies and their victims in revising the programmes above, and with one-to-one support in resolving the issues raised.

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves discussing the incidents with the pupils, reassuring them that they were right to bring the events to the attention of staff, that they were not telling tales and their actions will help others, they will be reminded that they should tell again if they have any new concerns. The teacher(s) involved and the principal will check from time to time with the child that everything is ok.

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.

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 ratified by the Board of Management on 03/10/2017, and will be reviewed annually.

Nicola Carey
Chairperson

Carole Fenton
Principal

APPENDIX A:

Types of bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

Physical aggression: This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

Intimidation: Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying: This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or the entire class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore"(implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".

Cyber-bullying: This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps,

gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

Name calling: Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.

Damage to property: Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

Extortion: Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.