

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Opening Statement

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by Tusla (*formally NEWB*) the Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Bríde, Blackwater, 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. It was drawn up by the Staff of Scoil Naomh Bríde, in consultation with the Board of Management and Parents' Association. The updated policy was uploaded on to the school's website for the parent body to review and make suggestions etc.

This policy was reviewed during March/April 2024 and only a few amendments were made as the policy is working well. All Staff, BOM members, Parents' Association and general parent body were involved in the review.

2. Key Principles of Best Practice

The Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Bríde 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) Scoil Naomh Bríde will adopt 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;
- acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being;
- promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline, and responsibility among all its members;
- prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members;
- has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning;
- has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs;
- takes particular care of 'at risk' pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention, where necessary, and responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner;
- recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis;
- recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills;
- recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying;
- promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities;
- promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school;

- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

(b) Effective leadership

- In Scoil Bríde we acknowledge that effective leadership is key to supporting a school culture and climate that celebrates difference. We strive to engender an ethos under which bullying is unacceptable.
- We will ensure that practical steps are taken to challenge and respond to bullying. Both Staff and pupils will be involved in accepting and celebrating diversity.
- The Principal and teachers of Scoil Naomh Bríde will act as good role models as pupils model their behaviour on that of adults. We will be fair, firm, clear and consistent in our disciplinary measures.
- The values and standards expected of teachers in Scoil Naomh Bríde will be in line with the ‘*Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers*’, published by the Teaching Council.
- The NEWB publication ‘*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*’ (Tusla) recognises the role of adults, including parents, in modelling good behaviour and states : “The adults in the school have a responsibility to model the school’s standards of behaviour, in their dealings both with pupils and with each other, since their example is a powerful source of learning for pupils. Parents should be expected to model the standards that pupils are asked to respect. In order to do this, they need to be familiar with the standards and to understand the importance of expecting pupils to behave according to these standards. The ways in which parents and teachers interact will provide pupils with a model of good working relationships”.

(c) A school-wide approach

- In Scoil Naomh Bríde a school-wide approach (involving school management, Staff, parents and pupils) to dealing with the problem of bullying behaviour is a key element of effective practice.
- Management and Staff, parents and pupils of Scoil Naomh Bríde have a role and responsibility in helping the school to prevent and address school-based bullying behaviour and to deal with any negative impact within school of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere – this needs to be brought to the attention of the parents. Parents should also recognise that a school that openly discusses bullying is acting positively and that they need to work with the school to ensure there is a coherent, school-wide approach to tackling the issue.
- In certain cases, it may be necessary for the school to seek the assistance of local persons and formal agencies such as NEPS/Tusla, social workers, community workers, Gardai etc.

(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

- In Scoil Naomh Bríde we will put in place appropriate systems to ensure that all relevant members of the school community have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour, as defined in Section 3 of this policy. The manner in which our school will develop and communicate this shared understanding amongst the pupils will depend on factors such as the age and maturity of the pupils concerned.
- The definition of bullying, the various types of bullying behaviour and the impacts of bullying are set out in Section 3 of this policy. These procedures will be communicated and explained to the school community.

(e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures)

Scoil Naomh Bríde will implement educational and prevention strategies that will -

- 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

- Scoil Naomh Bríde will develop a system under which good supervisory and monitoring measures are in place both to prevent/identify and deal with bullying behaviour.
- In the case where bullying has been identified it will be dealt with in an appropriate, sensitive and respectful manner.

(g) Supports for staff

- The Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Bríde will ensure that members of Staff have sufficient familiarity with the school's anti-bullying policy to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy when required. Supports for Staff will be appropriate to the individual's role and should enable Staff to recognise bullying, implement effective strategies for preventing bullying and, where appropriate, intervene effectively in bullying cases.
- The Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Bríde will also make arrangements to ensure that temporary Staff have sufficient awareness of the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy.

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

- Scoil Naomh Bríde will have a consistent and clear approach to dealing with bullying when it occurs. We will ensure there will be consistent recording, investigation and follow up on bullying behaviour.
- In Scoil Naomh Bríde the 'relevant teacher' is the class teacher.

(i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

- The effectiveness of the school's policy in Scoil Naomh Bríde will be subject to continuous review, in light of the incidents of bullying behaviour encountered.
- The template for recording and reporting bullying to the school Principal will be a valuable and readily accessible source of data in relation to bullying behaviour in our school.

3. Definition of Bullying

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.

Examples of bullying behaviours

<p>General behaviours which apply to all</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • The “look” • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
<p>Cyber</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation • Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name • Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Whatsapp/ Snapchat/Instagram/Tictok/You Tube or on games' consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology
<p>Identity Based Behaviours Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveler community).</p>	
<p>Homophobic and Transgender</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats

Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone’s friends away • “Bitching” • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The “look”
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues • Mimicking a person’s disability • Setting others up for ridicule

4. Relevant teacher for Investigating/Dealing with Incidents/Allegations of Bullying

The member of teaching Staff who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with incidents/allegations of bullying is referred to as the ‘relevant’ teacher. *In Scoil Naomh Bríde the relevant teacher is the class teacher.* (In certain circumstances, any teacher may act as a relevant teacher)

5. Agreed Strategies for the Prevention of Bullying

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyberbullying 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):

Education and prevention strategies
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<p>School-wide approach in Scoil Naomh Bríde</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community. • The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. • The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions. • Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils’ lives and the need to respond to it - prevention and intervention. • The professional development of the Staff will be addressed, as requested by Staff members.

- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community, on a needs' basis.
- 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.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be included in student journals and displayed publicly in classrooms.
- The school's Anti-Bullying strategies are discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school / also, on school website.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. 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.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
 - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
 - Hand note up with homework.
 - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
 - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the relevant teacher, if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. 'Stay Safe', 'Stop, Think, Do' 'Weaving Well-being', 'Friends First', 'Walk Tall'

Implementation of Curriculum

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes, when available.
- Delivery of lessons on bullying. Examples of lessons used in the school are 'Stay Safe' 'Stop, Think, Do'
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes, if available. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- The school will implement the advice in the RSE programme in all classes.

Links to other policies

- The school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying are The Code of Behaviour, Child Protection policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance, Sporting activities, Swimming Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, Data Protection.

6. Procedures for Investigation, Follow-Up and Recording Incidents/Alleged Bullying Behaviour and the Intervention Strategies for Dealing with Cases of Bullying

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Incidents/Alleged Bullying

The primary aim 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);

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting an incident/bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring an incident/alleged bullying to the attention of any 'relevant' teacher in the school.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretary, special needs assistants (SNAs), cleaners must report any incidents/ bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
- All reports, from any source, will be investigated by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will understand that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.

Investigating / Dealing with and Recording Incidents/Allegations of 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 practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame)
- All Staff must keep a written report of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher. The initial report should be recorded on Template 5 : Template for Recording Incidents/Allegations of Bullying
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of the alleged incidents of bullying as soon as they come to his/her attention and keep him/her updated of progress.
- While all incidents/allegations of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- It is imperative that recording of incidents/allegations of bullying must be done in an objective and factual manner.
- The written reports will be kept in the designated filing cabinet in the 'green room', as agreed by Staff.
- In investigating and dealing with incidents/alleged bullying, the (relevant)teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach.
- Where possible, incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved. The relevant teacher may consult with / enlist the help of other Staff members;
- 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 alleged 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. The group may be facilitated by two relevant teachers;
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;
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 parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the 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;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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;

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

Follow up

- 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;
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal (in the absence of the Principal)
- 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. This can have a therapeutic effect.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints' procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Formal Recording of Bullying Behaviour - Appendix 3 (From Department of Education Procedures)

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** 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.

In Scoil Naomh Bríde the following behaviours must be formally recorded and reported to the Principal (this list is not exhaustive) – these behaviours are in line with the school's Code of Behaviour –

- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher/pupil
- Explicit sexual behaviour or comments
- Extortion
- Serious damage to property
- Smoking or use of illegal drugs on school premises

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. These records will be stored in a designated filing cabinet in the 'green room' and will be retained until the relevant pupils have reached the minimum age of twenty-five. All members of Teaching Staff/Chairperson BOM will have access to these files.

Examples of intervention strategies which may be used -

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires

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

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience, whenever it is needed e.g.

- Pastoral care system
- Buddy / Peer mentoring system
- Group work such as circle time

- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. Parents will be encouraged to avail of appropriate support services for their child/ren. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The BOM/Staff of Scoil Naomh Bride will ensure 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. This will be in line with our Code of Behaviour and Supervision Policy.

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. Implementation, Communication and Review

A. This reviewed/amended policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 4/12/24 [date] and will be implemented immediately.

B. This policy has been made available to school personnel, members of Board of Management and Parents' Association. The policy is posted on the school website. A copy of this policy will be readily accessible to parents and pupils, on request. A copy of this policy will also be made available to the Department of Education and the patron, if requested.

C. 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 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.

Signed: Olive M^cGuinness
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: C. O'Donnell
(Principal)

Date: 4/12/24

Date: 4/12/24

Date of next review: March 2025