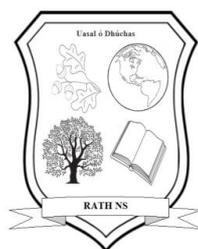


Scoil Náisiúnta an Chroí Ró-Naofa

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An Ráth
Bailebriotás,
Prtlaoise,
Co. Laois
R32Y510

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Introduction

The role of this school is to provide the highest possible standard of education for all our pupils. A stable, secure learning environment is an essential requirement to achieve this goal. Bullying behaviour, by its nature, undermines and dilutes the quality of education and imposes psychological damage. As such it is an issue which must be positively and firmly addressed through a range of school-based measures and strategies through which all members of the school community are enabled to act effectively in dealing with this behaviour.

Bullying thrives in an atmosphere of uncertainty and secrecy in which the victim often feels a sense of hopelessness and futility against the power being exercised by the bully. A high degree of collective vigilance is needed in the school and by parents if bullying behaviour is to be identified and dealt with in a fair and equitable manner.

Mutual respect, building of positive relationships and above all empathy are the corner-stones of our philosophy. We implement the principles of **Restorative Practice**, constantly aware of the underlying the values of:

Respect
Interconnectedness
Fairness
Personal Accountability
Honesty
Collaboration
Problem-solving

In accordance with the requirements of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000* and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the *National Educational Welfare Board*, the Board of Management of Rath National School 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 and is therefore fully committed to creating a positive school culture, and the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- Promote respectful relationships across the school
- Encourage a culture of telling and speaking up
- Respectful of difference and encourage inclusivity
- 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, homophobic and transphobic 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.

2. Bullying

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*.

Examples of bullying behaviours

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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The "look" • Use or terminology in a derogatory way
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

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

- The class teacher(s) initially.
- The Principal thereafter if necessary.

4. School Policy for prevention of Bullying

We have a whole school approach to prevent bullying where everybody in the school community is responsible for its prevention. We organise staff CPD on occasion and we organise whole-school initiatives on a regular basis (Appendix 1).

We strive to create a school atmosphere in which children feel safe and secure, knowing that they will be listened to and encouraged to report incidents of bullying behaviour. It is made clear that they are not telling tales but acting responsibly.

We allocate time in class to the subject, outlining the unacceptability of bullying and the type of atmosphere we desire to foster in the school.

We use the relevant lessons in the – *Stay Safe Programme, Grow in Love, Weaving Wellbeing Programme, Walk Tall Programme, SPHE Curriculum, Circle Time Activities and Webwise* to focus on the problem and the methods of eliminating it.

We implement procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying.

Some or all of these characteristics may be indicators of a child who bullies

- A bully may be male or female.
- A bully may be one who is bullied at home, on the street or at school.
- A bully may be found amongst children from an early age.
- A bully may be exposed to physical or psychological forms of aggression.
- A bully may often use a third party to carry out the bullying.
- Some bullies are quick to provoke the antagonism of others – tease, taunt – and then are quick to complain of others behaving similarly.
- A bully may often be physically stronger than others, may be aggressive and may enjoy conflict.
- A bully may feel neglected or over-looked at home or at school.
- A bully may have learning difficulties and may have a negative attitude to teachers or to authority.
- A bully may have low self-esteem and may try to compensate for this through her/ his bullying behavior.
- A bully may be one who is under pressure to succeed at all costs.
- A bully may be none of the above.

Definition of a Victim of Bullying

A victim of bullying is a person who suffers the repeated uninvited attention of another or others, or, who suffers as a result of being excluded or isolated by another or others.

How to recognise a victim of bullying

A victim may be a person perceived to be different from her/his peers.

- A victim may be a child who is over-protected.
- A victim may be low in self-esteem.
- A victim may be lacking in basic social skills and coping skills.
- A victim may be hypersensitive.
- A victim may be subjected to bullying because of her/his academic achievements.
- A victim may be a low achiever or a high achiever.
- A victim may be none of the above.

Recognising a Victim of Bullying at School

- Deterioration in educational performance
- Loses interest and enthusiasm for school
- Visible signs of anxiety/distress
- Possessions missing
- Unexplained bruises, injuries or torn clothes
- Are picked on, belittled or sneered at
- Are (Often) alone and excluded from peer group
- Frequent minor illnesses, especially headaches and tummy aches.

Recognising a Victim of Bullying at Home

- Unwillingness to go to school

- Anxiety about travelling to or from school
- Unexplained changes of mood or behaviour. This will often occur before the restart of school e.g. end of weekend, end of holidays.
- Frequent minor illnesses often accompanying the mood changes mentioned above.
- May begin to bully other children in the family.
- Increased request for money.
- Unexplained bruising, injuries, cuts, scratches.
- Reluctance to say what is troubling her.
- Give improbable excuses to explain any of above.

5. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with 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);

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach.

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

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as special needs assistants (SNAs), our school secretary, bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant) teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- 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;
- 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; another staff member should be in the vicinity when an investigation is taking place. While this staff member should not be involved in the investigation they should be within hearing distance of the investigation.
- 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;

- 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;
- 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 and recording

- All incidences deemed to be of bullying in nature, should be documented.
- 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
- 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.
- 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.

Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports 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.
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred

- 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.
- All information with regards to incidences that may occur prior to the identification of bullying must be recorded where relevant information can be used to determine whether an incident of bullying has or has not occurred.

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES 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; and
- b) Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal.

When the recording template is used, it will be kept in a specific folder in the Principal's office.

Established intervention strategies

- 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
- Anti-bullying and cyber bullying awareness week - Websites such as www.esafety.ie and www.webwise.ie are brought to the attention of the school community.
- Restorative interviews
- Strengthening the victim
- Mediation
- Restorative Practice Questions
- Question /Worry Box

Local Gardaí talk to 5th/6thclass pupils about bullying and cyber-bullying as part of An Garda's Schools Programmes.

6. Support programme for the pupil affected by bullying behaviour

He/she could become unsettled in themselves, be very distressed, something that could affect their self-esteem and escalate the bullying behaviour. The school needs to be vigilant of children that could be seen as 'different', but any child can be affected by bullying behaviour.

The child that is engaging in bullying behaviour: usually this is learned behaviour and they may lack in self-esteem. Usually the child is seeking attention and they rarely understand the consequences of this behaviour. Any child can engage in bullying behaviour.

If required, parents will be asked to consider counselling so as to help the child that is engaging in bullying behaviour, so as to help develop their self-esteem or to develop their social skills.

Continuous support will be needed from the child who is engaging in bullying behaviour and advice to help them in life so as to not infringe on the rights of other pupils. Regular check-ins will be conducted with a trusted member(s) of staff.

Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

7. 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.

A. Supervising the yard and pitch during break-time and at access/egress time.

B. Monitoring the corridors, classrooms, school games, training and school tours.

This policy will be implemented in the contexts of the school ethos, the SPHE curriculum, our RSE policy, Child Protection, Stay Safe, The Code of Behaviour.

8. 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.

9. Dignity in the Workplace

All school personnel are expected to abide by the **Dignity in the Workplace** Charter and to be a good example to children and to be professional in their dealings with all school personnel. In this way, we try to promote respectful relationships across the school community, by being aware of voice, tone, abruptness, body language, sarcasm, etc.

Adult bullying of a child

All complaints against a teacher are handled under the agreed INTO/CPSMA Complaints Procedure. A copy of this may be obtained from the school office at any time.

Parent bullying of a teacher

School Staff are entitled to work in a safe, professional environment free from harassment of any kind, including but not limited to verbal, written, cyber or physical bullying. Parents are reminded to make a formal appointment if they wish to discuss an issue.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on November 18, 2021.

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 Department 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 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.

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: _____

Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 1 Annual Timetable

Month	Activity
September	Anti-Bullying Lesson
October	Pupil Questionnaire
November	RSE / Stay Safe, Board of Management Annual Checklist
December	RSE / Stay Safe
January	Weaving Wellbeing / Anti-Bullying Lesson, Friendship Week
February	Weaving Wellbeing, Safer Internet Day
March	Weaving Wellbeing, Pupil Questionnaire
April	Anti-Bullying Lesson
May	Garda Schools Programme
June	Random Acts of Kindness Week (Student Council)

Appendix 2 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

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

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

Pupil concerned	
Other pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents
(tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School bus	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

--

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to property		Intimidation	
Isolation/exclusion		Malicious gossip	
Name calling		Other (specify)	

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of travelling comm.	Other (Specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

--

9. Details of actions taken

--

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)

Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Appendix 3 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	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying situation 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:

o 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].

o 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 _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____