Scoil Mhuire

Creeslough

Anti-Bullying Policy

Scoil Mhuire Creeslough: 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 Mhuire 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 positive school culture and climate which (See SPHE Teacher Guidelines for Creating a positive school climate and atmosphere, p.22)

-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

- 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 use of established intervention strategies); and
- 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,
- ❖ Cyber bullying

❖ 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.

4. Types of Bullying Behaviour

Physical Bullying

- physical aggression, (Kicking, punching, hitting, spitting, scratching, pushing, pinching)
- damage to property

Verbal Bullying

- name-calling,
- taunting or 'slagging'.
- teasing

Social Bullying

- intimidation,
- isolation,
- Ignoring
- 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

Cyber Bullying

❖ Posting anything hurtful on social media (photos or words)
❖ Hurtful text messages

Additional information on different types of bullying behaviour is set out in Section 2 of Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.

Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with this policy. However, the relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are the class teachers with the support of the Principal and Deputy Principal as necessary.

Reporting to Relevant Teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying

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

- Parents/ Guardians should contact their child's class teacher to report the incidents of bullying.
- A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school.
- Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.
- In these procedures, the member of teaching staff who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying is referred to as the "relevant teacher". The relevant teacher will normally be the class teacher.

Serious cases of bullying behaviour should be referred immediately to the Principal

5. **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**

Strategies for the prevention of bullying amongst children in Scoil Mhuire

It is best to educate the children about bullying and try to prevent it from occurring. In Scoil Mhuire we use some of the following strategies to help raise awareness and prevent bullying.

The Role of the Staff

- Promote the schools Code of Behaviour.
- Develop confident children who are able to articulate how they are feeling.
- Through S.P.H.E/Circle time and religious education discuss bullying.
- Listen to what the children have to say record it and deal with it accordingly.
- Recognise that there is no unique set of qualities that add up to making someone a bully.
- Provide ample opportunity for children to talk to you and make sure that they feel as if their problem is listened to while at the same time encourage the children to be confident in dealing with issue that might arise.
- Implement a Buddy System for any child who you feel might be a victim of bullying.
- Promote an annual Anti-Bullying week in each class.
- Work on conflict resolution in attempt to minimise cases of bullying by addressing it before it escalates.
- Recognise signs of bullying.
- Make staff aware of incidents and monitor behaviours closely in yard and school trips.
- Arrange for outside agencies such as Donegal Youth Service to talk to the children and parents on issues such as cyber bullying/ internet safety.
- Deal with all reports of bullying that occurs within school.
- Teach a lesson each September where the class collaboratively agrees on classroom rules which promote friendship.
- Two classes will complete an anti-bullying questionnaire every September on school safety. Data to be collated and to inform annual anti-bullying review.
- Classes are asked to sign the school 'Anti-Bullying Class Agreement' each September.

- From September 2022 a list of anti-bullying related training and courses completed by staff will be compiled and recorded in Appendix 4.

The Role of the Children

- Speak out and tell someone if they are being bullied. Tell a friend/ teacher/ parent/ guardian/ someone you trust.
- Be encouraged to stand up for themselves and each other without using any acts of aggression
- Tell someone to stop if they are doing something that they do not like.
- Participate in all activities in class that will promote anti-bullying.
- Ignore the bully and do not respond to taunts.
- The older children will endeavour to set a good example for the younger children.
- Children form a school council each year to promote the voice of the children in school life.
- Children use the Buddy Bench in the yard if they do not have someone to play with during yard time. All children are asked to approach someone at the bench to include them in their games.
- Children celebrate Down Syndrome odd socks day and raise money and awareness for charities including Lamb Shafter and the Dyslexia Association of Ireland. Autism awareness is also part of promoting an inclusive school environment.

The Role of Parents

- Encourage good behaviour.
- Promote a positive impression of the school.
- Encourage children to be confident and report any incident of bullying to class teacher/ person in school who they trust.
- Promote the Code of Behaviour
- Attend talks that the school arrange to educate them on internet safety.

Role of the Board of Management

The Board of Management will take responsibility for the review and ratification of the Anti- Bullying Policy.

Investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying

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:***

The creation of a positive school environment is of the utmost importance in Scoil Mhuire. We hope to foster a climate of respect for each individual. This is achieved by teaching of Social Personal Health Education curriculum. Material from the following programmes: Stay Safe, Relationships and Sexuality Education, Religious Education, Walk Tall will be used to during these lessons.

(See Appendix 5: Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate)

Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying

(i) The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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);

(ii) 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;

(iii) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. 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;

(iv) 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 relevant teacher.

(v) 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;

(vi) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;

(vii) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.

(viii) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;

(ix) 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.

(x) 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.

(xi) 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;

(xii) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.

(xiii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

(xiv) 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;

(xv) 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;

(xvi) 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;

(xvii) 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;

(xviii) 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 at Appendix 3

(xix) 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 parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.

(xx) 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.

(xxi) 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

After a case of bullying

It is important that both the victim and the bully are treated with care and respect. Often the person that does the bullying is low in self-esteem and time should be spent working on developing self-esteem and confidence of both parties.

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

- Address the reason why the child was bullied.
- Reinforce S.P.H.E. lessons to develop self-confidence of both parties.
- Set up a whole class support group.
- Establish a buddy system for the school yard/ bus.

- Constantly refer to the code of behaviour and remind the whole school on acceptable behaviours.
- Seek the aid of outside agencies eg. NEP's, HSE

8. 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.

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. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 16th July 2020.
11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, will be 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, 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.

Signed: Margaret Anne O' Reilly
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: John O' Doherty
(Principal)

Date:16th July 2020

Date:16th July 2020

Reviewed: _____

Signed:_____

Date:_____

Anti-Bullying Policy-Adult

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire, Creeslough, recognises that all employees have the right to a workplace free from bullying and sexual harassment and is fully committed to ensuring that all employees are able to enjoy that right.

There is a responsibility on all employees to ensure a workplace free from bullying and sexual harassment for all other employees, and to be aware of this policy.

Any complaint of bullying or sexual harassment shall be fully and properly investigated and, if substantiated, will be regarded as grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. An attempt will be made to resolve the complaint informally in the first instance but if this is not possible, a formal procedure will be invoked. Confidentiality will be ensured, insofar as is possible, at all times during the investigation for all parties involved.

What is Sexual Harassment?
Sexual Harassment means unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on a person's sex which affects the dignity of men and women at work. This can include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct which is offensive and causes discomfort or humiliation to the individual concerned.

Examples of sexual harassment include:
1. Unwanted physical or verbal advances
2. Unwanted touching or physical gestures
3. Comments and remarks of a sexual or discriminatory nature
4. Unwelcome comments about a person's appearance
5. Demands of sexual favours
6. Displays of pinups and pornographic material
7. Innuendoes of a sexual nature or based on a person's sex
8. Bullying

This list is not exhaustive

Making a complaint of sexual harassment/adult bullying

Any employee who feels he or she has been or is being sexually harasses or bullied should ask the perpetrator to stop. Where this form of action is unsuccessful the employee may report the matter to any of the following- the Principal, INTO staff representative or teacher member of the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire.

Attempts will be made to resolve the matter informally, if appropriate. If it is not possible to resolve the matter informally, a formal complaints procedure shall be applied incorporating the following steps:

1. A written report to the Board of Management should be made by the complainant or an authorised person to whom the complaint is being made and signed by the complainant.
2. The complaint will be investigated with minimum delay as confidentially as possible by two individuals named by the Board of Management, one of whom shall be the same sex as the complainant and the alleged perpetrator.
3. Both parties may be accompanied /represented at all interviews/meetings held, and these shall be recorded.
4. Where a complaint is found to be substantiated, the extent and the nature of the sexual harassment will determine the form of action to be taken. These actions may include a verbal warning, a written warning, suspension from some duties with or without pay, suspension from full duties with or without pay or dismissal.
5. Where an employee is victimised as a result of invoking or participating in any aspect of the complaints procedure, including acting as a witness for another employee, such behaviour will also be subject to disciplinary action.

No record of any complaint will be registered on an employee's file unless the formal procedure outlined above has been invoked.

It is the policy of the school that issues of sexual harassment are best dealt with within the school. However, no aspect of this policy affects any employee's individual legal rights to take their complaint outside of the school.

This policy was prepared by representatives of the B.O.M., in consultation with teachers and ancillary staff.

The policy was implemented by the B.O.M. of Scoil Mhuire in _____ and reviewed regularly. The most recent review took place in November 2019.

Signed: Margaret Anne O' Reilly   Date:16th June 2020

Chairperson of the Board of Management, Scoil Mhuire, Creeslough)

_____

Reviewed:

Margaret Anne O' Reilly   16/11/2020

John O' Doherty   16/11/2020

_____

_____

Appendix 2 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school.
  - o Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
  - o Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

Appendix 3 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

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 Traveller community	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 _____

* Note: The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.

Scoil Mhuire Creeslough   Anti-Bullying Policy

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*?	Yes
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	Yes
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?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	Yes
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	Yes
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	Yes
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	Yes
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	Yes
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?	Yes
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	No
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	No
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	No
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?	N/A
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	No
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	N/A

Signed _Margaret Anne O'Reilly_   Date _October 2nd 2023._
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _John O'Doherty_   Date _02.10.2023_
Principal

Scoil Mhuire Creeslough   Anti-Bullying Policy

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

To: **Scoil Mhuire School Community**

The Board of Management of **Scoil Mhuire, Creeslough,** 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 2nd October 2023.

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 *Margaret Anne O'Reilly*   Date *October 2nd 2023*
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed *John O'Doherty*   Date *02.10.2023*
Principal

Appendix 5

Anti-Bullying related training completed by staff

Staff Member	Date	Course	Facilitator
All Staff Members	September 2022	Child Protection Training	Patricia Shanahan

Scoil Mhuire Creeslough   Anti-Bullying Policy