



Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál
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ANTI BULLYING POLICY

- This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 31/3/14
- This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents Council. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.
- This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once every school year (Term 2). 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 Council. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: Fr. Michael Kennedy
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Fiona Ryan
(Principal)

REVIEWED YEARLY

2022-23 academic year

To be Reviewed on 28th February 2023 **Signed: Breda Hickey, Chairperson, B.O.M.**

1. Introductory Statement

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with teachers and Board of Management in February 2004 and amended in January 2014 in accordance with the requirements of The Educational Welfare Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the N.E.W.B. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the "Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary School" - September 2013.

2. Rationale

1. The policy is required to assist Scoil Mhuire gan Smál in devising school-based measures to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to increase awareness of bullying behaviour in our school community as a whole e.g. school management, teaching

and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents as well as those from the local community who interface with the school.

2. Involving and encouraging all members of the school community in developing, formulating and reviewing this policy on bullying promotes partnership, ownership and implementation of a 'living policy,' one which is actively implemented/promoted in the whole school community.

3. The school climate of Scoil Mhuire gan Smál and atmosphere are created by the actions of everyone in this school. The behaviour of the adults in a child's life, including parents and teachers, is a significant influence on how a child acts.

4. The Department of Education and Skills requires all schools to have a written policy on bullying.

3. Aims

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/guardians.
- To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.

4. Definitions

"Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person(s) and which is repeated over time" - *Anti - Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools - September 2013*.

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 needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including 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.

5. Procedures For Prevention & Dealing with bullying

1. A school climate of mutual respect is encouraged and nurtured. Every effort will be made by all school staff to adopt a positive approach to behaviour, using positive techniques of motivation and encouragement.
2. A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact is taught in conjunction with the S.P.H.E. programme. Our website and newsletters keeps the school community updated.
3. Issues of respect, trust, self esteem and bullying (see definition) are dealt with systematically in all classes as well as in individual classes as the need arises.
4. The school places greater emphasis on rewards rather than on sanctions in the belief that this will, in the long run, give best results.
5. The school recognizes and welcomes the variety of difference that exists between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
6. It is school policy to keep rules to a minimum and our school rules are positively stated in terms of what pupils **should** do.
7. School staff are very conscious of the need for effective supervision and monitoring of pupils and try to ensure pupils and all areas of school activity are adequately supervised.
8. Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour are implemented.
9. Our Anti Bullying policy is reviewed annually (Term 2) to monitor its effectiveness.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are:

- Class teacher
- Teacher on supervision (Yard/Classroom)
- S.N.A. on duty
- Principal

7. Education & prevention of bullying strategies used by the school include:

1. Teaching definition of "what is bullying" to all pupils.
2. Creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and caring in our school community.
3. Teaching of S.P.H.E. programme.
4. Teaching of Stay Safe programme.
5. Teaching of R.S.E. programme and awareness and understanding of sexual diversity.
6. The use of "circle time".
7. The use of anti bullying posters.

8. Procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour

A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school and the "relevant teacher" will use the following guides to and investigate and deal with the concern.

1. Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour. Such incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to avoid the public humiliation of the victim or pupil engaged in bullying to get both sides of the story. The interviews will be dealt with sensitively and with due regard to the rights of the pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly concerned may also provide valuable information.
 - a) The teacher will make every effort to resolve the issue and restore relationships between the parties involved.
 - b) 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.

c) All reports of alleged bullying will be investigated by the relevant teacher in order to gain pupils confidence in "telling"

d) All school staff eg: secretary/SNA/coaches are encouraged to report to the relevant teacher incidents of bullying witnessed by them.

e) Parents & pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring relationships as far as practicable.

2. Questions such as what, where when, who and why will be asked in a calm manner, thus dealing with the conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
3. If a gang is involved, each member should be interviewed individually and then the gang met as a group.
4. If it is concluded 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 Code of Behaviour and Discipline and try to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view.
5. Each member of the gang will be helped to handle the possible pressures that often face them from other members after the interview.
6. Teachers who are investigating cases of bullying behaviour will keep a written record of their discussions with those involved. It may also be helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident.
7. In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, a meeting with the parents/guardians of those involved will take place as appropriate, explaining the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy. Ways in which their help and support can be given will be discussed.
8. 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;
9. 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;
10. Follow up meetings with the two parties involved will be arranged separately with a view to possibly bring them together at a later date.
11. Some pupils involved in bullying behaviour may need assistance on an ongoing basis and counselling may be advised, as with the victims also, to boost their levels of self-esteem.
12. In certain cases, it may be necessary to invite the assistance of other local persons and formal agencies such as Gardaí, health boards with their social workers and community workers.
13. 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.

14. 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:
 - a. Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
 - b. Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
 - c. Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
 - d. Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
15. If 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;
16. 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.

9. School's programme of support for working with pupils effected by bullying.

1. Teaching of S.P.H.E. programme.
2. Teaching of Stay Safe programme.
3. Teaching of R.S.E. programme and awareness and understanding of sexual diversity.
4. The use of "circle time".
5. Teaching of children an internet etiquette and stay guidelines while on the internet at home or in school.
6. The engaging of outside speakers to senior classes to facilitate a workshop on cyber bullying.
7. Inform parents via website and /or newsletter of useful tips to combat bullying of all types.
8. When and where necessary to engage an outside mediator/counsellor to speak to the children.

10. Supervision & 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.

11. 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.