



Scoil Aine

Roll number:19567K

Policy
on
Anti-Bullying

Due to the unique nature of Scoil Aine as part of a specialised service for children with various mental health issues there may be instances when a child is attending the CAMHS service either as the bully or the bullied. In this case the bullying issue will be dealt with intensively in a therapeutic forum and so is beyond the remit of this policy document. For children attending Scoil Aine for different reasons the following policy applies

This policy has been formulated for the purpose of guiding action and organisation within the school for preventing and responding to bullying. This policy embodies the spirit of the school as laid out in the Mission Statement for Scoil Aine. (please refer)

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 Aine 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 (September 2013).

Aims

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 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; involves collaboration among and between staff & pupils 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 ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Guidelines

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools bullying is defined as follows:

'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 gender identity 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 do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour. Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Appendix 1 of this policy document.

The relevant staff for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

- The staff member initially
- The principal thereafter if necessary

The following education and prevention strategies, at the appropriate and relevant level for each class, will be used by the school:

- Reinforcing a strong school ethos of positive school climate and atmosphere, respect for each individual, development of individuals' self esteem.
- To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour. To devise measures to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour. More intensive programmes with victims, bullies and their peers.
- Comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures are in place through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation at all times during the day.
- Prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying, including cyber bullying (educating pupils how to stay safe while online). Staff members can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner.
- The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.
- The Stay Safe / RSE / Zippy's Friends / Incredible Years / Friends for Life programmes at primary level/ wellbeing programs at post primary level are personal safety skills programmes which seek to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. Various other social, health and media education programmes can further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour.

- Many other curricular areas such as Art, Drama, Religious Education, and Physical Education can lend themselves well to addressing the theme of bullying. Co-operation and group enterprise can be promoted through sport as well as through practical subjects.
- Provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.

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,

Staff awareness raising:

Alerting school staff to the indications of bullying:

- a. Anxiety about attending school.
- b. Deterioration in educational performance.
- c. Pattern of physical illness.
- d. Unexplained changes in mood or behaviour.
- e. Visible signs of anxiety or distress.
- f. Possessions missing.
- g. Increased requests for money.
- h. Unexplained bruising.
- i. Reluctance to say what is troubling him/her.

Arranging relevant training programs, new or refresher (onsite and offsite) for the school staff group to keep updated and upskilled – gender bullying, cyber-bullying talks , TCI training etc.

INVESTIGATING

(i) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the staff member will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved

(ii) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant staff. 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

(iii) 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

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

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

(vi) Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved

(vii) 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

(viii) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant staff should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who, how and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner

(ix) 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

(x) 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

(xi) Where the relevant staff has/have 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

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

(xiii) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant staff 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. 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

(xiv) 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;

(xv) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may 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

(xvi) An additional follow-up meeting with parents of the children involved may take place after an appropriate time to ensure that the matter has been resolved satisfactorily

(xvii) 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

(xviii) 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.

RECORDING:

Noting and reporting of bullying behaviour is to be documented using the *template for recording bullying behaviour* (Appendix 3). All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

(i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the staff team, the staff will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same

(ii) If it is established by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher(s) 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

(iii) The relevant staff member must use the recording template to record the bullying behaviour

(iv). The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations. Therefore various approaches and intervention strategies may be used including suggesting that parents seek referrals so that appropriate outside agencies in order to receive further support for the pupils and their families if needed.

(v) 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.

(vi) For cases of adult bullying the procedures as outlined in the INTO/Management Bodies publication " Working Together. Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations" will be followed.

Success Criteria

We will judge the success of the plan on the basis of observing:

- The level of incidents of bullying in the school
- A positive, happy and trusting atmosphere in the school
- Pupils showing respect, compassion and empathy towards each other

Roles and Responsibility

The principal will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy.

School staff will educate all children against bullying behaviour, cyber bullying and identity based bullying as appropriate to ages of the students.

Parents will be vigilant for signs or symptoms of bullying and support the school in its efforts to prevent bullying

Implementation Date

This policy is operational and has been reviewed in 2020

Timetable for Review

This policy will continue to be reviewed annually

Ratification & Communication

This policy will be left in the Principal’s office and will be made available to the parents, school staff and all relevant staff who work with the children and adolescents. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the patron if requested.

Ratified by Board of Management on -----

Signed -----

Chairperson, Board of Management

