

Scoil Iósaif Naofa Anti-Bullying Policy

This anti-bullying policy operates in conjunction with the Code of Behaviour, which was drawn up during the school year 2009/2010 and implemented in September 2010. Teachers, parents, staff, Board of Management and pupils are involved in planning and developing this policy.

1. Rationale

The school has a central role in the children's social moral development just as it does in their academic development. In school, we work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. The individuality of each child needs to be accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of every child to education in a disruption-free environment.

The purpose of this policy is to protect all members of our school community from being bullied and to ensure that effective remedial steps are taken where bullying arises. This policy aims to promote an atmosphere of honesty and respect in which pupils and parents are encouraged to talk openly about their experiences and concerns and to enable teachers, pupils and parents to create and maintain a pleasant working and learning environment within the school.

2. Why is an anti-bullying policy necessary?

The school community believes that all our pupils have a right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment. We are aware that no school is immune from bullying and so it is a priority issue identified by the school.

The school also wishes to meet its obligations under the Education Act: the Equal Status Acts, 2000 to 2004; and the advice and recommendations laid down in DES Guidelines on Countering Bullying, and the Child Protection Guidelines

3. Relationship to the characteristic spirit of the school

Our aim in Scoil Iósaif Naofa is to generate and maintain an inclusive climate of learning within which every pupil is enabled to develop and fulfil their own unique potential.

4. Aims of the Policy

- To foster a school ethos of mutual and self-respect
- To raise awareness within the school community of the unacceptability of bullying
- To outline, promote and raise awareness of preventative approaches that can be used in response to reported incidences of bullying
- To ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under supervision
- To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour
- To outline procedures for noting and reporting instances of bullying behaviour
- To outline procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour

- To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-bullying behaviour

5. Content of Policy

1. Definition of Bullying
2. Indications of Bullying
3. Strategies for Prevention of Bullying
4. Procedures for dealing with incidents of Bullying
5. Board of Management
6. Reference to other policies

5.1 Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as repeated aggression, whether verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. Examples of bullying include physical aggression, damage to property, intimidation, isolation, name-calling, taunting or 'slagging'. Child to child bullying, teacher to child, intra staff bullying, parent to staff and parent to child bullying (including a child other than their own) are examples of the areas where bullying may occur.

Isolated instances of aggressive behaviour, which would be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour, would not be described as bullying. However when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing, it is bullying.

The school acknowledges that there are three parties involved in bullying – those who bully, those who are bullied and those who witness the bullying. Staff and teachers bear this in mind when dealing with bullying incidences and try to support and work with all parties involved.

5.2 Indications of Bullying.

Physical Signs: (which include but are not limited to)

- Unexplained bruising, cuts, scratches, sprains or torn clothing
- Loss or damage to personal belongings
- Hunger/thirst due to loss of lunch to a bully
- Frequent minor illnesses, headaches, stomach aches
- Not eating or being obsessive about appearance and cleanliness
- Stammering
- Asking for extra money or stealing (to pay off a bully)
- Bedwetting

Emotional and Psychological signs: (which include but are not limited to)

- Fearfulness
- Acute anxiety
- Panic attacks
- Avoiding friends and/or other children
- Uncharacteristic bullying of siblings and/or other pupils
- Refusal to discuss what is wrong
- Change of sleeping/eating pattern
- Becoming withdrawn or moody
- Dropping usual hobbies/interests

- Loss of confidence or self-esteem
- Excessive tearfulness or crying themselves to sleep
- Nightmares
- Excessive sensitivity to criticism
- Seeking to be alone
- Uncharacteristic outbursts of anger

Signs related to school (which include but are not limited to)

- Returning from school in a very bad mood and showing reluctance to talk about it
- Unwillingness to go to school or asking to be accompanied
- Changing school route
- Uncharacteristic nervousness in class
- Staying close to teachers
- Punctuality problems
- Poor concentration and a deterioration in school work
- A reduction in the number of friends, being excluded from groups
- A reluctance to take part in previously enjoyed activities
- Never being chosen for sports teams
- Abusive phone calls
- Abusive text messages or e-mails

N.B. Parents/Guardians should communicate with their children on a daily basis about their experience in school.

5.3 Strategies to prevent bullying

The school recognises the need to prevent and not just control bullying. We at Scoil Íosaif Naofa consider that all members of the school community have responsibilities in this regard and we use a number of strategies

Teacher:

1. Act as a good role-model.
2. Be firm, clear and consistent in disciplinary measures.
3. Promote mutual respect.
4. Reward effort and improvement
5. Encourage/promote self-confidence and self-esteem.
6. Teach the bullying topic in the “Stay Safe” and “Walk Tall” programmes.
7. Curricular area (e.g. SPHE and Alive-0) offer opportunities to address areas in relation to bullying.
8. Make and Display Anti-Bullying posters in school.
9. Circle time/discrete time to discuss bullying behaviour.
10. Make parents/guardians aware of any problems, anxieties, worries or changes that are observed in the child’s behaviour. (teacher will record these discretely)
11. Ensure pupils are aware of and understand our anti bullying policy
12. Issue bullying questionnaire as part of **Anti-Bully Awareness Week** each year.

Parents/Guardians:

1. Act as a good role-model.
2. Encourage/promote self-confidence and self-esteem.
3. Talk to your child about what they may have learned about bullying in class.

4. Listen to your child if they are reporting an alleged bullying incident.
5. Find out the full facts - record dates, times, places and people involved.
6. Talk to (a) your child's teacher (b) the Principal.
7. Discuss our anti-bullying policy with your child.
8. Deal with incidents of bullying in school through the procedures laid out in this policy.
9. Remain vigilant and communicate daily with your children about their experiences at school.

5.4. Procedures for Investigating/Recording and Resolving reported incidents of Bullying Behaviour.

Incidents of bullying and reports of bullying are taken seriously and investigated by the school. All reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by teachers. In this way, pupils will gain confidence in telling which is vital in early detection of a problem.

Child to Child Bullying

Stage One

Unless the incident is of a very serious nature, it will be dealt with by the classroom teacher who will talk to the children involved. Teachers respect the need to support the esteem of each party involved in an incident. When a teacher becomes aware that a child is regularly involved in incidents he/she will start a record of such incidents, (see **Incident Report Form in Appendix A**)

. The purpose of this record is:

- To aid memory by recording details of the incident
- For clarity in assessment of the situation
- For planning and intervention

When a record of incidences is being kept, parent(s) will be informed.

Should the action taken at this stage prove not to have resolved the issue, the staff will proceed to stage two.

Stage Two

The Principal will arrange to meet with the class teacher and parents of the child who is seen to be bullying and separately with the parents of the victim of bullying. The children themselves may be required to attend part or all of these meetings. The child who is bullying will be placed on report. This means that the child's behaviour in all areas is monitored during the day. The child meets with his teacher and together they decide on what is to be written for that part of the day. All positive behaviour, progress on work etc will be noted. At the end of the day, the teacher writes his/her own comment. The purpose of this report is to focus as much as possible on the positive qualities and efforts of the child and to motivate the child to move away from negative behaviour. The child should be able to see that parents and school are working together in his interest so the co-operation of the parents is essential. Initially a review of the reports will be carried out on a weekly basis, in a meeting with the Principal, teacher, parents and child. If progress is being made, longer intervals between meetings may be decided upon. The child who is the victim of bullying will also meet with the teacher, Principal and his parents. The aim of such a meeting(s) will be to address emotional needs and devise strategies for the child to deal with the bullying. This may involve reinforcing the programme being covered in class, or other strategies.

Stage 3

It is the duty of the school to provide a safe environment for all the children. Should the above interventions fail and the bullying continue, a programme of appropriate sanctions may be implemented by the Principal in consultation with the parents and Board of Management. Sanctions implemented aim to encourage positive behaviour and support the esteem of the child. These sanctions may include a period of suspension during which there will be ongoing consultation with the parents to decide on appropriate action(s) to be taken in the best interests of the child. Suspension for any period of time will be reported in writing by the Principal to the Chair of the Board of Management.

Bullying by Adults

In the case of **intra-staff bullying**, the school will adopt the procedures outlined in Section C (c2) of the INTO booklet: 'Working Together: Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations'. A copy of this document is available for free download on the INTO website.

In the case of **Teacher – Child bullying**, a complaint should in the first instance be raised with the teacher in question by the parent/guardian of the child if possible and then if necessary referred to the Principal. Where it has not been possible to agree a framework for resolution, the matter should be referred in writing by both parties to the Chairperson of the Board of Management for investigation.

In the case of **Parent – Teacher** bullying, the Principal should be informed in the first instance, and if deemed necessary the Chairperson of the Board of Management should subsequently be informed in writing.

In the case of **Parent/Visitor to the school – Child** bullying, the complaint should be referred in the first instance to the child's class teacher and subsequently to the Principal if unresolved.

In the case of **Principal – Parent/ Child** bullying, the matter should be raised with the Principal if possible, or referred to the Chairperson of the Board of Management

If incidents are not solved at Board Level, parents/legal guardians will be advised of their rights to appeal their case to the Department of Education and Skills.

5.5 Board of Management

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring that all members of the school community are enabled to deal effectively with bullying. The Board is committed to providing time and resources for the implementation of the policy. The Board will ensure that proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to prevent bullying and to deal with incidents appropriately as they arise.

5.6 Links to other policies

This anti-bullying policy is linked to other policies within the school plan. Among these are the schools'

Code of Behaviour

Child Protection Policy

Internet Safety: Acceptable Use Policy

March 2011

Health and Safety Policy
S.P.H.E. plan
Alive-O Religion Programme

6. Evaluation

This Policy has been drawn up in consultation with the Board of Management, parents, staff and pupils. It will be monitored regularly and reviewed annually in the light of experience.

7. Success Criteria

The success of this policy will be determined by
Feedback from teachers, pupils, parents.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

The implementation of this policy depends on the co-operation and collaboration of
All

Signed: _____

Chairperson Board of Management

Date:

Appendix A:

Incident Report:

Teacher ----- **Class** -----

Date ----- **Time** -----

Names of Students: _____

Details of Incident:

Action Taken:

Suggestions for follow-up:

Signed: ----- **(Class Teacher)**



Scoil Iósaif Naofa Anti-Bullying Code

We want Scoil Iósaif Naofa to be a place where:

**Pupils, Teachers and Parents treat each other fairly
and with respect**

Bullying Behaviour is not accepted

**People feel safe and are able to report bullying without
being afraid**

People stand up for and support each other