

Scoil Uí Riada- Anti-bullying Policy



Scoil Uí Riada

An Bhánóg, Cill Choca, Co. Chill Dara

Uimhir Rolla: 198971

Introduction

Scoil Uí Riada is an all Irish co-educational primary school established in 1985 by parents wishing to have their children taught through the medium of Irish. The school aims to promote the Irish language and its associated culture within the school and in the general public at large.

The school's motto is SONAS (spreagaimís onóir, neamhspleachas, aonarachas & sábháilteacht) í Scoil Uí Riada.

The school supports the principles of inclusiveness and equality of access to all pupils within the context and parameters of DES regulations and programmes.

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 Uí Riada in collaboration with the Teachers and Parents' Association 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.

Should there be any discrepancy between the Irish and English in this policy, it is accepted that the Irish is the correct version and the English is provided as a translation.

Rationale

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) 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 nonthreatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- (b) Effective leadership
- (c) A school-wide approach
- (d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- (e) 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;
- (f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

(g) Supports for staff

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

(i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Relationship to School Ethos

Our mission statement is to provide an excellent standard of education through the medium of Irish, steeped in an ethos that promotes Christian values and Irish heritage. We recognise, Scoil Uí Riada, that we are a community; the school staff, pupils and parents and that it is imperative that we protect our school children. We strive to create a positive, safe school where children can realise their full potential.

Aims of the Policy

The aims of the policy are;

- To cultivate a school ethos which shows regard for oneself and for others and encourages pupils to reveal episodes of bullying and to discuss them.
- To spread awareness that bullying is unacceptable behaviour among school management, teachers, pupils and parents/carers.
- To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and antibullying behavior.

Definition of 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, a once-off offensive or hurtful text message about an individual that is subsequently passed on by others shall constitute bullying behaviour by all involved in 'forwarding' the offensive or hurtful text message.

Also, 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.

Examples of bullying behaviours

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying

- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.
- Physical aggression
- Damage to property
- Name calling
- Slagging
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
- Offensive graffiti
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Insulting or offensive gestures
- The “look”
- Invasion of personal space
- A combination of any of the types listed.

Cyber

- Denigration: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation
- Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual
- Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name
- Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight
- Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online
- Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images
- Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group
- Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety

- Silent telephone/mobile phone call
- Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive text messages
- Abusive email
- Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles
- Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures
- Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

Identity Based Behaviours

Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).

Homophobic and Transgender

- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation
- Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner
- Physical intimidation or attacks
- Threats

Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community

- 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

This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying.

Behaviours include:

- 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
- Unwarranted hateful looks
- Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way

Sexual

- Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching
- Harassment

Special Educational Needs, Disability

- 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

Educational Strategies

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are the child's class teacher. However, any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it. The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:

Whole-School approach

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Involvement of the student council (senior students) in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be included in student journals and displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)s and copies are available on our school website.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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

- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
 - o Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
 - o Hand note up with homework.
 - o Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
 - o Anti-bully or Niggle box may be made available in the more senior classes
 - o Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
 - o Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

- In the more senior classes, (third class-sixth class), the class teacher shall administer a confidential questionnaire once a term to all pupils to monitor and investigate bullying incidents in the classroom. (Attached to this)
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum, the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Cool School Lessons, Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary and post- primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

Links to other policies

Our Anti-Bullying policy supports and underlines other school policies, for e.g. Code of Behaviour and our Child Protections policy and other policies as they are created for the school.

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

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 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 secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), 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:

- 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;
- 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 nonaggressive 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;
- The child in question will be asked to sign an 'anti-bullying' contract to avoid engaging in this bullying behaviour in the future. (attached)
- Should this contract fail, a second contract will be signed along with the parents present to help stop the bullying behavior (attached).
- 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

- 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)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 (report form & checklist attached).
- 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/deputy 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 (hand-written version of Appendix 3) which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- This information is stored in the pupils' individual profiles folder.

Formal Stage 2- Formal reporting- Typed Appendix 3 on ALADDIN

The relevant teacher must use the Bullying recording template (Appendix 3) on ALADDIN 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 or Deputy Principal as applicable.

When the official recording template is used, it must typed on an Aladdin Bullying template and attached to the child(ren)'s personal file. A printed copy of the information saved in Aladdin must be retained by the relevant teacher in their pupil profiles and a copy maintained by the deputy principal. These records are stored in a locked filing cabinet in the office. This information is stored in the school.

Established intervention strategies

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements / contracts 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)s to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews

School Support Programmes

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

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g. - Buddy / Peer mentoring system - Group work such as circle time
- If pupils require counselling of further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

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

o The Schools Broadband Programme has blocked all social networking sites on the basis that they waste time and take up too much of the bandwidth which is been provided for educational purposes only.

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

Adult Bullying

It is more difficult to identify adult bullying as it is usually;

*Persistent

*Without effort

*Subtle

*Rarely physical

In the case of *intra-staff bullying*, the procedures outlined in INTO booklet “Working Together: Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations”, will be followed. This booklet is available from www.into.ie or in the staffroom.

In the case of *Teacher-Child bullying*, the parent/guardian should adhere to the complaints procedure:

1. Contact the teacher in question to resolve the issue;
2. If no resolution can be found, contact the Principal;

3. If no resolution can be found, write a letter to the Board of Management.

In the case of *Parent/School Visitor* – Child Bullying, the parent/guardian should contact the class teacher to resolve the issue. If no resolution can be found, the matter should be referred to the Principal.

Roles and Responsibilities

Children:

Respect each other

Adhere to the School's Code of Behaviour

Adhere to class rules

Staff members:

- Monitoring
- Remind the children of the school ethos
- Discuss this policy with the children
- Teach lessons about friendship and bullying behaviour
- Teach strategies to enable the child to avoid bullying
- “Stop, ní maith liom é!”
- Conduct themselves properly with children, parents, colleagues and visitors
- Administer Bullying Survey once per term from 2nd/3rd class up to 6th class
- Investigate any incidents of bullying that are disclosed
- Follow the agreed procedures outlined above
- Inform the Principal if they are aware of or have concerns regarding bullying
- Inform the parents
- Implement the intervention programme

Parents/Guardians:

- Support the school ethos
- Communicate with the Teacher/principal and with their child if they have any concerns

- Assist with friendship activities taking place within the school
- Support the intervention programme
- Parents involved in or supporting school activities must do so within the bounds of this policy

Principal/Deputy Principal:

- Monitoring
- Remind children and staff of our school ethos
- Discuss this policy with the children and with the staff
- Ensure the Code of Discipline and Anti-Bullying Policy are being properly implemented within the school
- Follow the agreed procedures outlined above
- Investigate any incident of bullying reported
- Inform the Parents of any bullying behaviour
- Implement an intervention programme
- Inform the Board of Management of any cases of bullying
- Refer to the Board any case of bullying which was not resolved through the intervention programme
- Recommend the provision of appropriate training for staff and update on a regular basis;

Board of Management:

- Create and implement an anti-bullying policy
- Discuss issues regarding bullying at each meeting
- Provide the staff with appropriate training, where necessary
- Deal with cases of bullying that were not resolved through the intervention programme
- Contact the relevant professionals (School inspector or National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)) as appropriate

- Review this policy.

Success Criteria:

- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and children
- Observation of behaviour in classrooms, corridors, yard
- Review yearly with the Board of Management.

The Board of Management, the school staff and the Parents Council have together agreed on the Anti-Bullying Policy.

Plan to Revise and Evaluate the Anti-Bullying Policy

The Board of Management will review and evaluate this Anti-Bullying Policy every year, after discussing it with the school staff, pupils and parents/guardians.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 20-1-18

Signed : _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Principal

Date: _____

Dáta: _____

This policy will be reviewed in: January 2019

