

Loch an Gháir



Mol an Óige

Scoil Mhuire,
Loughegar,
Mullingar,
Co. Westmeath
N91 TD 95



Anti-Bullying Policy

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 Loughgar National School 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.

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; 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:
 - a) build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - b) explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying;
 - c) effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- 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.

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, 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.

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

Examples of bullying behaviours

<p>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Cyber</p>	<p>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</p>

	<p>Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</p> <p>Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online</p> <p>Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</p> <p>Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</p> <p>Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety</p> <p>Silent telephone/mobile phone call</p> <p>Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls</p> <p>Abusive text messages</p> <p>Abusive email</p> <p>Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles</p> <p>Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures</p> <p>Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</p>
<p>Identity Based Behaviours</p> <p>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).</p>	
<p>Homophobic and Transgender</p>	<p>Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation</p> <p>Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation</p> <p>Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner</p> <p>Physical intimidation or attacks</p> <p>Threats</p>
<p>Race, Nationality, Ethnic Background and Membership of the Traveller Community</p>	<p>Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background</p> <p>Exclusion on the basis of any of the above</p>
<p>Relational</p>	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <p>Malicious gossip</p> <p>Isolation & exclusion</p> <p>Ignoring</p> <p>Excluding from the group</p> <p>Taking someone's friends away</p> <p>"Bitching"</p> <p>Spreading rumours</p> <p>Breaking confidence</p>

	Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear The “look” 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

The Relevant Teachers in this school are:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- All class teachers

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

Sample Education and Prevention Strategies

School-Wide 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.

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.

The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils each year and particularly during SPHE lessons.

We 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.

Implementation of Curricula

The full implementation of the SPHE and 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. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme.

Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes. 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 School Policies

School policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying include:

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protections Policy
- Supervision of pupils
- Acceptable Use policy
- Attendance

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

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)

Reporting Bullying Behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to the relevant teacher in the school.
- A suspicion of bullying should be raised with the relevant class teacher first and then, if necessary, with the principal.
- Parents are encouraged to make an appointment to speak with relevant class teacher if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- 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), 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 non-aggressive manner;
- Questions to be asked when responding to challenging behaviour include:
 - What happened?
 - What were you thinking at the time?
 - What have your thoughts been since?
 - Who has been affected by what you did?
 - In what way have they been affected?
 - What do you think needs to happen next?
- Questions to be asked when responding to those harmed include:
 - What happened?
 - What were you thinking at the time?
 - What have your thoughts been since?
 - How has this affected you / others?
 - What has been the hardest thing for you?
- 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 may 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 will afford parent(s)/guardian(s) the 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;
- 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

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher 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.
- The relevant teacher may consult with the Principal or Deputy Principal at any stage in relation to a case.

Programme of Support for Pupils Affected by Bullying

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.

If pupils require counselling or 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.

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.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

Implementation and Review

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:
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 28th November 2022

Signed:
(Principal)

Date: 28th November 2022