**Polasaí Bobaireachta- Gaelscoil de hÍde**

1. **INTRODUCTION**

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 Gaelscoil de hÍde, Roscomáin 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:

- Gaelscoil de hÍde promotes a positive school culture and climate which

 - welcomes difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity

 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening

 environment

 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community.

- Effective leadership is very important within the school.

- A school-wide approach is taken to bullying.

-There is a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact among the school population.

-We implement prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying .

-We provide effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;

- There are supports in place for staff;

- We have consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour.

- There is on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

**B. 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, 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 including physical aggression, intimidation, isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying,name-calling, damage to property and extortion.

1. **TEACHER RESPONSIBLE FOR INVESTIGATING ALLEGED BULLYING INCIDENTS**

 The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is as follows:The class teacher/An múinteoir ranga

1. ***PREVENTION STRATEGIES:***

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the teachers in Gaelscoil de hÍde are as follows:

-A whole school Anti bullying policy has been developed in collaboration with the whole school community.

- The revised policy will be circulated to all current parents .

- At the start of each school year parents will be asked to read the policy with their children and from first class upwards children will sign a statement saying that they will do their best to be kind to other children. Their parents will countersign this promise. Parents of children in infants will sign that they have received and read the schools’ bullying policy.

Each class will devise classroom rules at the beginning of each year which will promote inclusion, acceptance of difference and respect for one another. Children will sign their acceptance of the Class Code.

-Cyber bullying workshops will be organised for children in the middle and senior classes. Local Community gardaí will help us in this regard.

- Cyberbullying workshops will be organized for parents. Local Community gardaí will help us in this regard.

-Social skills workshop for children with special needs in this area will be made available. The resource teacher will organise these workshops

- Additional help will be given to children with special needs in rang 6 as they move on to secondary school.

-A Bullying Awareness Day will be held each term for all classes using resources from the antibullying campaign website and other sources. We hope that over time bullying behaviour will be RECOGNISED,REJECTED and REPORTED (the 3 R’s). Pupils will be helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm, rational age appropriate manner outside the tense context of bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms it can take. Pupils will be encouraged to report bullying behaviour either spontaneously or through the questionnaires that will be regularly used in school.

- We will have a friendship half day each term which will include class based/school based fun activities which promote co-operation, sharing, friendship between all the children. Class discussions on friendships will be held.

-The staff will implement the school’s SPHE programme in full including The Stay Safe Programme and Beo go Deo/Grow in Love.

-The SPHE curriculum will be taught in all classes and it explores bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.

- Discussion of the school’s Anti-bullying policy and code of behaviour will be regularly discussed at staff meetings.

1. **PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATION,FOLLOW-UP AND RECORDING**

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 :

-Class teachers have the responsibility to deal with cases of bullying brought to their attention.

- Non- teaching staff will be encouraged to report any incidents, without judgement ,to the class teacher having recorded initial scant details or suspicion of an incident including time, date, pupils involved and other pupils present

- Class teachers must take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour. Incidents need to be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity with the aim of establishing the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it. The teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. 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. It may be helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident.

-The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to establish the facts, to resolve any issues and to restore as far as is practicable the relationships of the parties involved. The investigating teacher does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a “mistake” that can and must be remedied. A restorative practice approach will be used in its initial stage of resolving the situation. The teacher emphasizes that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain to them how hurtful and harmful bullying is. The teacher should tell the pupil that he/she is in breach of the school’s anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to help him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

· 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 will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The class teacher will also inform the principal. The school will give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils.

· 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.

 The following steps are taken in dealing with bullying behaviour:

· A verbal warning is given to the perpetrator to stop the offending behaviour. The perpetrator is requested to apologise to the victim and to give an assurance that the offending behaviour will stop. The parents will be informed at this stage.

 A follow-up meeting with the relevant parties involved will be arranged and the pupils brought together.

· If after the above, the bullying behaviour reoccurs a formal meeting of the perpetrator, his/her parents /guardians, the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management will be held and the situation will be discussed. It will be hoped, following this meeting, that there will be an improvement in behaviour.

-If following this meeting there is no improvement and the bullying behaviour is continuing a formal suspension may occur. The Chairperson has the authority to enact an immediate suspension or the situation may be brought before the Board of Management.

- All incidents of bullying must be recorded in writing by the investigating teacher. The investigating teacher will complete a report on the school’s official template including the findings of the investigation, the strategies used, the outcomes and any other relevant information. The class teacher will keep the recording template and will provide a copy to the principal if she/he feels that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has taken place.

- The parents of the bullied child will also be informed and a meeting arranged. The schools’ programme for supporting pupils who have been bullied will be discussed.

- All documentation regarding bullying incidents will be kept in the school until a pupil reaches 21 years of age.

1. **SUPPORT PROGRAMME**

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

***The child bullying----***

- If the school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) will be sought.

- Serious instances of bullying behaviour will, in accordance with the Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for primary and post-primary schools, be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

- If the school is unsure the DLP will seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

***The child affected by bullying***-

- they will be included in a social skills workshop conducted by the resource teacher to help raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience.

**G. SUPERVISION AND MONITORING OF CHILDREN**

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.

1. **PREVENTION OF HARRASSMENT**

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.

**RATIFICATION AND REVIEW OF POLICY**

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 21/1/’14

This policy will be implemented in Gaelscoil de hÍde from the 28/4/’14.

 This policy has been made available to school personnel and it will be circulated to all the school’s parents on the 28/4/’14. A copy has also been provided to the Parents’ Association. 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 in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel and will be readily accessible to parents 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.

***Síniú***\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ***Síniú:*** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(***Cathaoirleach an Bhord Bhainistíochta)*** (***Príomhoide)***

***Dáta***: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ***Dáta***: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Date of next review***: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_