

Scoil Chearbhaill Uí Dhálaigh

NOTE: This template is based on the Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour (1993) (hereinafter referred to as the Guidelines) although account is taken of more recent legislative/regulatory changes and reference is also made to issues of contemporary concern such as text bullying, cyber-bullying and homophobic bullying.

Anti-Bullying Policy 2009

This policy was formulated during the school year 2008-2009

It was compiled for the school community: teaching staff, other school staff, pupils, parents/guardians and the Board of Management.

Scope

The policy addresses bullying behaviour, harassment and sexual harassment.

While this policy addresses issues related to bullying of students (i.e. situations in which one or more students are the victim(s) of bullying), the policy applies to teaching and other school staff, parents/guardians, and others insofar as measures under the policy relate to them.

As employers, school management must comply with the requirements of the Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004 (available for download at the Oireachtas website) and, in this regard, there is also have an anti-bullying and anti-harassment policy in place for staff (a statutory Code of Practice applies to harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace).

The policy applies to a number of time periods/activities as follows:

- School time (including break times)
- In the school yard
- Going to and from school
- School tours/trips
- Extra-curricular activities
- While on the school bus

Rationale

The Scoil Uí Dhálaigh school community recognise the need to formulate an anti-bullying policy at this time.

1. As no school is immune from the problem of bullying
2. It is a priority issue identified by the staff, pupils and the school community
3. Under Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 ([available for download at the Oireachtas website](#)), the management authority of a school is obliged to draw up a Code of Behaviour for students at the school. The Act provides that the Code of Behaviour must be prepared by the board of management after consultation with the principal, teachers, parents and the local Education Welfare Officer. The **Guidelines** specify that an anti-bullying policy “*should be an integral part of a written Code of Behaviour and Discipline in all primary and post-primary schools*”. The **Guidelines** go on to point out that “*International research clearly indicates the crucial importance of the existence of a School Policy, which includes specific measures to deal with bullying behaviour within the framework of an overall school Code of Behaviour and Discipline*” and that “*such a code, properly devised and implemented, can be the most influential measure in countering bullying behaviour in schools.*”

4. School management must comply with the requirements of the Equal Status Acts, 2000 to 2004 (available for download at the Oireachtas website).

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

1. The School seeks to enable each student to develop his/her full potential.
2. The School provides a safe and secure environment for learning.
3. The School promotes respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.
4. The School promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the inter-dependence of people in groups and communities.
5. The School takes particular care of at risk students and uses its monitoring system to provide early intervention when/if necessary and responds to the needs, fears and anxieties of individual students in a sensitive manner.

Policy Aims

Scoil Chearbhaill Uí Dhálaigh believes that all pupils have the right to learn in an environment that is supportive, caring, safe and free from the fear of bullying.

The objectives of the policy are:

1. To create a school ethos which encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
2. To raise awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour with school management, teachers, students, parents/guardians.
3. To create a school ethos that acknowledges, accommodates and respects a diversity of students across the nine grounds covered by the equality legislation.
4. To ensure that the school's Social, Personal and Health Education programme raises awareness of the factors associated with bullying behaviour and develops appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviours.

5. To take practical actions to prevent incidents of bullying behaviour e.g. to ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
6. To develop procedures for reporting and recording incidents of bullying behaviour.
7. To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
8. To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and those involved in bullying behaviour.
9. To work with, and through, the various local agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour.

Key measures (content of policy)

The policy is divided into three sections:

- A. Clearly define bullying and identify the types of behaviour involved
- B. Identify actions to prevent bullying behaviour
- C. Identify the steps to be taken in dealing with bullying incidents

A. Clearly define bullying and identify the types of behaviour involved

Definition of Bullying:

Bullying is defined as repeated aggression conducted by an individual or a group against another person - such aggressive behaviour may be verbal, psychological, emotional or physical.

For the purposes of this policy, the term bullying also encompasses harassment and sexual harassment, defined as follows:

1. **Harassment:** any form of unwanted conduct in relation to any of the nine grounds named in the equality legislation that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating,

hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the victim.

2. **Sexual harassment:** any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the victim.

The nine grounds are gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller Community.

Types of behaviour involved

This policy recognises that means of bullying are constantly changing and the following list of types of bullying behaviour can be expanded in light of the experience of the school community:

- Physical aggression
- Damage to property
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Gestures
- Silent telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive text messages
- Abusive email/website messages
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
- Isolation & exclusion
- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.
- Name calling
- Slagging

- A combination of any of the types listed.

This is not an exhaustive list.

Signs that a child may be the victim of bullying include:

1. A drop in his/her standard of school work
2. Physical signs
3. Change of mood
4. Change of behaviour, e.g. bullying of siblings
5. Unwilling to go to school
6. Damage to possessions, or items missing
7. Regression to earlier developmental stages, e.g. bed-wetting, thumb-sucking, being quieter than usual, lack of self-esteem.
8. Loss of appetite

B. Identify actions to prevent bullying behaviour

Procedures for noting and reporting an incident of bullying: All reports of bullying will be noted, investigated and dealt with by teachers. In that way pupils will gain confidence in “telling”. This confidence factor is of vital importance.

Supervision and Monitoring

Teachers will take a calm and objective approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents/guardians. In any incident of alleged bullying, the teacher will speak separately to the pupils involved, in an attempt to hear both sides of the story. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of the pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide useful information in this context.

Inclusion in the Curriculum

The school commits to implementing an anti-bullying programme, using curricular resources such as:

1. (a) Walk Tall

(b) Stay Safe

(c) Beo go Deo

2. Having an annual Bullying Awareness Day/Week for all classes.

C. Procedures to be followed in investigating an incident of bullying incidents

Serious cases of bullying behaviour by pupils will be referred immediately to the Principal.

1. Parents/Guardians of the pupils involved will be informed of the incident by the class teacher earlier rather than later so that all are given the opportunity of discussing the matter. They are then in a position to help and support their children before a crisis occurs.
2. Non-teaching staff, such as caretakers, cleaners and bus drivers are encouraged to report any incidents of aggressive or bullying behaviour witnessed by them to the teaching staff.
3. In the case of an issue regarding a staff member, this should in the first instance be raised with the staff member in question and, if necessary, with the Principal.
4. In the case of an issue regarding a parent/guardian, this should in the first instance be raised with the parent/guardian in question and, if necessary, with the Principal.
5. Where cases relating to either a pupil or a teacher remain unsolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the school's Board of Management. (see Complaints Procedure).
6. If not solved at Board level, refer to local inspectorate.

Procedures to be followed in dealing with reported incidents

1. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why, in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with the conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
2. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually and then the individuals are met as a group. Each

group member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said. Other pupils may also be interviewed to get a clearer picture.

3. If it concluded that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her that such behaviour is unacceptable and every effort will be made to enable the perpetrator to see the situation from the victim's point of view.
4. The "No Blame" approach:
 - Interview the perpetrator and the child being bullied.
 - Interview others who were involved.
 - Explain the problem.
 - Share responsibility.
 - Encourage pupils to identify solutions.
 - Meet them again.
5. Teachers who are investigating cases of bullying behaviour will keep a written record of their discussions with those involved. It may also be helpful or appropriate to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident.
6. In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, a meeting is arranged with the parents/guardians of the two parties involved as appropriate,
 - a) to explain actions being taken and the reason for them, referring the parents/guardians to the school policy,
 - b) to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions taken by the school.
7. Separate follow-up meetings will be arranged with the two parties involved, with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the victim is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.

Follow-up steps to be taken in dealing with bullying behaviour

1. Pupil will be warned officially to stop the bullying

behaviour. Verbal

reprimand to include reasoning and advice on how to improve.

2. Temporary separation from other pupils until calm and ready to resume work / play. This strategy to be used at the discretion of the teacher, depending on the situation and age of the pupil.
3. The child may be removed to another classroom for a short period as a calming measure. This strategy to be used at the discretion of the teacher, depending on the situation and age of the pupil.
4. Pupil apologises sincerely.
5. Parents/guardian are contacted about behaviour in writing using the standard journal and returned to the class teacher, signed by parents/guardian.
6. A pupil is sent to the Principal together with the teacher for serious or recurring misbehaviours.
7. The pupil is asked to write about his/her misbehaviour, when he/she behaved so, and how the behaviour will improve (to be signed by parents/guardian).
8. In instances of continually recurring or serious misbehaviours, the Principal will arrange a formal meeting with the parents/guardian and the teacher together.
9. Parents will be informed that the pupil will be suspended if there is another incident of serious mis-behaviour.
10. Referral to the Board of Management
11. Suspension is used to deal with a continuously disruptive pupil, or a pupil who commits a serious breach of discipline.

If a matter remains unsolved at Board level, the case is escalated to the level of local inspectorate.

Links to Other Policies and to Curriculum Delivery

This policy is consistent with the policies listed below, within the framework of the overall School Plan.

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection
- Internet Safety: Acceptable Use Policy

- Health and Safety

Implementation Date

The Board of Management officially ratified this policy on 01 April 2009

The policy will be reviewed at the end of four years, or beforehand if needs be, and within the framework of school planning.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____