



Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg  
Bóthar Rúisc  
Dún Búinne  
Co na Mí

## **ADULT 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 Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg has **adopted the following adult anti-bullying policy** within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour.

The Board of Management of Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of employees/teachers and is therefore fully committed to the following **key principles of best practice** in preventing and tackling adult bullying behaviour:

### **Adult Bullying/Harassment**

The procedure set out below may be initiated in relation to any of the following circumstances, which may occur in the workplace or otherwise in the course of employment.

- Adult bullying
- Sexual harassment or
- Harassment on other specified discriminatory grounds which could in the circumstances be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidating.

Any such behaviour is not acceptable within the school. A complaint of sexual harassment or bullying may result in disciplinary action. Where a complaint of sexual harassment or bullying is not upheld, no action shall be taken against the complainant provided the allegation was made in good faith. If the complaint was brought maliciously, it should be treated as misconduct and the disciplinary procedure invoked.

It is also open to any member who considers that he/she is being discriminated against, to contact his/her CEC District Representative or INTO Head Office with a view to referring a complaint to the Director of Equality Investigations or Labour Court, as the case may be.

For the purposes of the procedures outlined in this document, the METNS adopts the **definition of bullying** set out by the Health and Safety Authority which is:

"Bullying in the workplace is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person or persons. Bullying is where aggression or cruelty, viciousness, intimidation or a need to humiliate, dominate the relationships. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, while to be condemned, should not be described as bullying. In the workplace environment there can be conflicts and interpersonal difficulties. Many of these are legitimate industrial relations difficulties which should be dealt with through the appropriate industrial relations channels. Only aggressive behaviour which is systematic and ongoing should be regarded as bullying."

Adult bullying can take many forms which usually include:

- intimidation or harassment
- aggression
- verbal abuse
- humiliation
- undermining
- dominance or abuse of power
- different or unfavourable treatment
- exclusion or isolation

**Key features** of adult bullying are that the behaviour is generally:

- persistent and/or systematic
- unwanted
- subtle
- non-physical

The exercise of legitimate management functions, in a reasonable and fair manner, does not constitute bullying.

## **Bullying/Harassment Procedures**

### **Preamble**

The procedure outlined below is designed to address adult bullying, sexual harassment or other harassment arising in the workplace or otherwise in the course of employment, in a fair and effective manner. In implementing the procedure, it is recommended that emphasis should be placed on assuring the party who considers that he/she is being bullied/harassed that his/her complaint is acknowledged, that the matter will be investigated effectively and sensitively and in accordance with due process.

Equally, where it is found that bullying or harassment has occurred, the emphasis, firstly, is to ensure that the offending behaviour immediately ceases and secondly, to help the offending party acknowledge that his/her behaviour is unacceptable and that steps must be taken to address the matter constructively thereby avoiding any recurrence.

It is important to ensure that resolution is achieved at the earliest opportunity. Further, it may be appropriate for the victim or the offended to attend counselling or obtain such other help as may be required.

### **Stage 1: Address the Matter**

1. The party (party A) who considers that he/she is being bullied, sexually harassed or harassed on other specified discriminatory grounds, should decide to address the matter. However, in light of the potential effects of bullying or harassment on an individual, including loss of confidence, extreme upset, anxiety or fear, a party may initially decide to seek INTO counselling, in order to consider the most appropriate application of the procedures, in the circumstances.

2. Party A should keep a record of the pattern of behaviour or instances where he/she considers that bullying/harassment has occurred. The record should contain details such as dates, times, persons present, details of what was said or what occurred.

### **Stage 2: Informally Address the Problem**

1. The party who considers that he/she is being bullied, sexually harassed or harassed on other discriminatory grounds (Part A), should request a meeting with the other party (B), in order to discuss matters. The following should apply:

- where necessary, the meeting may be facilitated by a third party, generally a teaching colleague;
- Party A should clearly outline his/her difficulties and should clearly object to the bullying/harassment and request that it stop
- It is important that party A bear in mind, that the other member of staff may not be aware that his/her behaviour is causing difficulty;
- both parties should seek to resolve their differences and establish a pattern of interaction exclusive of any forms of bullying/harassment;
- Party B may respond to party A at that meeting or if requested, should be given an opportunity to consider his/her response, in which case the meeting may be adjourned. Party B should respond to a constructive manner;
- the resolution, as appropriate, may include any of the following eg. A commitment to cease the particular behaviour, modify the behaviour, plan to eliminate situations where the parties would be in conflict or monitoring.

Alternatively, it may emerge as a result of the discussions between the parties, that there may have been a degree of misunderstanding in relation to certain behaviours and the resolution may make provision for compromise or appropriate explanation or acknowledgement.

2. If there is no satisfactory indication of resolution between the parties, party A should refer the complaint to stage 3, ie formal procedures.

### **Stage 3: Principal Teacher or Chairperson of the Board of Management**

1. Stage 3 provides a mechanism for the principal teacher to intervene and resolve the matter. However, if the principal teacher is one of parties, the chairperson of the board of management should then be involved, in an individual capacity, in order to achieve resolution. In circumstances where the

chairperson may also be involved at Stage 2, another member of the board may be designated to intervene.

2. Party A should advise party B that he/she is proceeding with Stage 3.

3. Party A should state his/her complaint in writing and request the principal teacher (or chairperson of the board of management, as the case may be) to investigate the matter.

4. The principal teacher (or chairperson of the board of management, as the case may be) should:

- obtain background details including details of what occurred at the previous stage,
- consider the patterns of behaviour and the timescale
- hear the parties and seek to resolve the matter
- act in a fair and impartial manner and deal with the matter sensitively, having regard to the nature of the problem and the principles of the process
- exercise judgement and make decisions which he/she considers necessary to resolve matters

5. The outcome of the discussions should be noted by the parties

- The matter should be dealt with confidentially
- Where resolution has not been possible and particularly where there is a likelihood of the offending behaviour continuing, either party or the principal teacher (or the chairperson of the board of management as the case may be), should refer the matter to the board of management in accordance with Stage 4.

#### **Stage 4: Board of Management**

- It is open to any of the parties or the principal teacher (or chairperson of the board of management, as the case may be) to refer the matter to the board of management for investigation. The referral should be in writing and dated and should include a copy of the written complaint.
- The board of management should consider the issues and investigate the matter.
- The board may enquire into the background of the difficulties including obtaining details on the sequence of initiatives taken at previous stages
- The board or the chairperson of the board may meet teachers individually or collectively and may also request written submissions from the regard also to the principles of due process
- The board may request the principal teacher to furnish a written submission
- The board may afford the parties an opportunity to present their case orally at a board meeting, in each other's presence
- Following oral presentations the board of management may designate the chairperson to meet with the parties again, separately or jointly, if further clarification is required or to work towards resolution
- The board of management may convene a number of meetings in order to achieve resolution
- The board of management shall act in a fair and impartial manner in order to achieve resolution and shall deal with the matter sensitively, having regard to the nature of the problem.

1. Having considered all matters, the board of management should reach a view on the matter not later than 20 school days after receipt of the written request/referral.
2. Where the board of management finds that bullying/harassment has not occurred, both parties should be informed accordingly. No action shall be taken against the complainant provided the allegation was made in good faith. If the complaint was brought maliciously, it should be treated as misconduct and appropriate action taken.
3. Where the board of management finds that bullying/harassment has occurred, the board should deal with the matter appropriately and effectively.

This may include:

- the issuing of a clear warning that bullying/harassment is not acceptable in the school workplace and that it will not be tolerated
  - a demand that all forms of bullying/harassment cease and that acceptable patterns of interaction be established between the parties
  - an instruction to the offending party that he/she apologise / express regret or give an assurance that the bullying/harassment behaviour will cease
  - seeking a commitment to attend counselling or the welfare service
  - more serious disciplinary sanctions as may be commensurate and appropriate, such as:
    - o oral warning
    - o written reprimand
    - o written warning
    - o final written warning
    - o suspension
    - o dismissal
4. As part of the resolution, the board of management should monitor the situation and should put systems in place to ensure that it is kept informed that resolutions are being implemented. The board of management should keep matters under review.

### **Training**

This Policy will be reviewed and evaluated regularly and any training needs arising from implementing such a policy will be addressed.

### **Adoption and Review of Policy**

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_ [date].

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

12. 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.

**Review**

This policy will be referred to regularly to check that is being consistently implemented by all staff. Policy will be reviewed by staff annually.

Approved by Board of Management:

Date: 14/9/21

Signed by Chairperson, Board of Management:

Seamus Caobhánaigh

Signed by Principal:

Seán Ó Ráinín

- 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.
- An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
- 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 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 all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (every year).
- The implementation of regular (e.g. per year/per term/per month/per week) whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; annual or term or monthly student surveys; regular school or year group assemblies by principal, deputy principal, year heads etc.
- 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.:
  - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - Hand note up with homework.
  - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
  - Anti-bully or Niggle box?
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - Administer a confidential questionnaire once a term to all pupils.
  - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
  - **Summary**
  - Discipline for Learning Policy
  - Positive reinforcement
  - Respect and Self- respect promoted on a daily basis
  - Uniqueness of Individual respect/difference
  - Promotion of self-confidence/self -esteem through games/music/dance/drama/quizzes/religious
  - **Bullying awareness week**
  - **On line/Cyber Bullying-Awareness**
  - **Inclusion/social skills**
  - **Respect diversity/Racism**
  - **Ongoing supervising/ monitoring**
  - **Friendship week/Nigglebx**
  - **Reference to other school policies**
  - **School policies**

- SPHE Plan/Stay Safe Programme
- Harassment
- Sexual Harassment/RSE Policy
- Record keeping
- Health and Safety
- Equality
- Special Educational Needs
- Polasai Gaeilge
- Internet AUP

6. 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 (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

Procedures for investigating and dealing with Bullying :

Teachers will take a calm unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by either pupils, staff or parents/ guardians. Such incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to avoid the public humiliation of the victim or the pupil engaged in the bullying. In any incident of bullying, the teacher will speak separately to the pupils involved, in an attempt to get 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 very useful information this way.

- Every case will be dealt with in the strictest confidence
- 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 a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually (with another adult present) and then the individuals are met as a group. Each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said.
- If it is concluded that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/ her how he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and try to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view.
- Each member of the group will be helped to handle the possible pressures that often face them from the other members after interviews by the teacher.
- Teachers who are investigating cases of bullying behaviour will keep a written record of their discussions with those involved. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident.
- In case where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, teacher/teacher and Principal/Principal meet with the parents/guardians of the two parties involved as appropriate to (a) explain the Actions being taken, referring them to school policies.
- (b) Discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions taken by the school.
- Separate follow-up meetings, with the two parties involved will be arranged, with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the victim is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic affect for both the victim and the bully.
- If further support is required by the bullies or victims the school will supply names of those who may help..

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :



- 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.
  - Pastoral care system
  - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
  - Tutor/Year head system
  - Care team / Student Support Team
  - 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. NEPS, HSE, CAMS.

Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

### 8. 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.

### 9. 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.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 14/9/24 [date].

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. 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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: [Signature] Signed: [Signature]  
(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: 14/9/24 Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of next review: 14/9/24<sup>3</sup>

## Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.

Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.

Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.

Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.

Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.

Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are ignored.

Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.

Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.

Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.

Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.

Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.

Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.

Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.

All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.

Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.

School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school.

o Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.

o Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.

Support the establishment and work of student councils.

Siniú an Cathaoirleach:

Seamus Conboy

Date: 14-9-21

Siniú an Príomhóide:

Seán Ó Laminin

Date: 14/9/21