Scoil Mhuire, Trim
Anti-Bullying Policy

Scoil Mhuire is committed to ensuring that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied.

This Anti-bullying Policy -

- Has been developed within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour.
- Fulfils the requirements of the Education Welfare Act 2000, and the Code of Behaviour Guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) in relation to Anti-bullying.
- Fully complies with the requirements of *the Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013).*
- Is Cognisant of *Circular 0033/2021 (2.2.1)* in relation to Anti-bullying and Inspectorate Engagement with Post-Primary Schools.

The policy is presented using the *Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools September 2013,* Appendix 1 and draws on material developed by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST).

The policy was developed through the work of the Anti-bullying committee, established in 2022. The committee reviewed the current Anti-bullying Policy (2016). Input from students, parents/guardians and teachers was compiled through online surveys and focus groups. Currently a sociogram is being piloted in second year as a proactive measure in tackling bullying.

1. 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 Mhuire, Trim** 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.

2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students 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 non-threatening environment.
    - 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, awareness raising and prevention strategies that**

- build empathy, respect and resilience in students.

- explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying.

(f) **Effective supervision and monitoring of students**

(g) **Supports for staff**

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

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

3. 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

- 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.*

4.   The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying in Scoil Mhuire are as follows

---

Principal
Deputy Principals
Year Heads
Form Teachers
Care Team
Guidance Counsellors
Teacher to whom the bullying was disclosed.
As appropriate to the individual situation.
Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

---

5.   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 (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

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 students through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Students 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 develop an aware-ness of what bullying is, how it impacts on students' 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 students, 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.

- Mentoring system in place for 1st Year students by 5th Year students (Athrú). Senior prefects work with all classes.

- 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 students, and all parent(s)/guardian(s)s are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (every year).

- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures, for example - year group assemblies, promotion of friendship and bullying prevention, Multicultural Awareness Week, Workshops with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Internet Safety Workshops, Mental Health Awareness Activities.

- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the role of Bystanders and Up-standers. In this way students gain confidence in 'telling'. It is made clear to all students that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales but are be-having responsibly.

- Ensuring that students know who to tell and how to tell:
    - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
    - Hand a note up with homework.
    - Send a message via Teams to a trusted teacher.
    - Get a parent/guardian or friend to tell on your behalf.
    - Ensure Bystanders are potential Upstanders in the making and understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

- 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/guardians.

- An Acceptable Use Policy which includes the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the students' use of mobile phones.

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE and CSPE curricula and the RSE Programmes.

- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.

- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes. The SPHE department continuously review available resources and draw on the most appropriate and up to date materials for use with students.

- 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 stu-dents to respond appropriately.

Other policies relevant to Anti-bullying include -
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Acceptable Use policy
- Attendance
- Use of Mobile Phones and other electronic devices
- Dignity in the Workplace

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 -

---

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)

The school's procedures will be consistent with the following approach.
Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including students, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any student 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), 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 students 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 will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.

- Where possible incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all students concerned. Students who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.

- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done 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 at first. If deemed appropriate, those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.

- Each member of a group will 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 will 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 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 will inform them of the supports available to the students.

- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a student has been engaged in bullying be-haviour, it will be made clear to them how they are in breach of the school's Anti-bullying Policy and efforts will be made to try to get them to see the situation from the perspective of the student being bullied.

- It will also be made clear to all involved (each set of students and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, their 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 will, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following fac-tors 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) or the school Principal or Deputy Principals.

- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the students involved are 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) will be referred, as appropriate to the school's complaints procedures.

- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will 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 may keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents will be reported to the relevant teacher who will store all the written reports.

- All reports including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, who will keep a written record of any discussions and actions taken during the investigation.

- The relevant teacher will inform the 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 will 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.

- Following the investigation written records will be stored in the relevant year head office.

Formal Stage 2

The relevant teacher will use the recording template at **Appendix 3** 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 bullying incident is considered serious enough, the issue may be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principals.

When the recording template is used, it will be stored in the relevant Year Head office.

Established intervention strategies

- Teacher interviews with all students
- Negotiating agreements between students and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process.
- Mediation
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s)s to support school interventions.
- No Blame Approach
- Sociogram questionnaire (Pilot January 2023)
- Strengthening the victim (Pilot January 2023)
- Disciplinary measures

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8.16 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools) :

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the students 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
    - Form Teacher/Year head system
    - Care team
    - Group work such as circle time
    - Meetings with guidance counsellor
    - Encouraged to join extra-curricular activity

- If students require counselling of further supports, the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the student affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

- The importance of students being Upstanders rather than Bystanders, in relation to bullying activity, is reinforced through class presentations and discussions.

8.   Supervision and Monitoring of Students

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring 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 9th February 2023

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 school patron (CEIST) and the Department of Education 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 to the school patron (CEIST) and the department of Education if requested.

Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Students engaged in bullying incident.

3. Source of bullying concern/report

Student concerned	
Another student	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other (Specify)	

4. Location of incident/s

School grounds	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School bus	
Lockers	
Other (Specify)	

5. Name of person/s reporting bullying concern.

6. Type of bullying behaviour

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (Specify)	

7. Where bullying is regarded as identity based, indicate the relevant category.

Homophobic	Disability/SEN	Racist	Traveller related	Other (Specify

8. Brief description of behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant teacher)

Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____