

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 Ardscoil Rís, Griffith Ave, Dublin 9 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.

Our Anti Bullying policy will also continue to be influenced by Cineáltas, the action plan to prevent and address bullying. As part of the implementation of Cineáltas the Department of Education will be publishing updated Bí Cineálta procedures for schools to prevent and address bullying in the coming months with training being made available for all school staff, parents and board of management members.

2. 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;
 - promotes Bí Cineálta among everyone
 - 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-
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
 - 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.

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 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:

General Behaviours which apply to all types of Bullying.

- 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
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures of other materials aimed at intimidating another person.
- Offensive graffiti
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Invasion of personal space
- Spreading rumours
- A combination of any of the types listed.
- Cyber Bullying is covered by a separate policy

Identity Based Behaviours:

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 Travelling Community)

Homophobic and Transgender:

- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation
- Name calling, e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian ...used in a derogatory manner

- Physical intimidation or attacks
- Threats

Race, Nationality, Ethnic background, and membership of the Travelling Community.

- Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background.
- Exclusion on the basis of any of the above.

Relational:

This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:

- Malicious gossip
- Isolation and exclusion
- Ignoring
- Excluding from the group
- Taking someone's friend away
- "Bitching"
- Spreading rumours
- Breaking confidence
- 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 Education, Needs, Disability, High Achievers and Gifted Learners

- 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.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is/are as follows:

- The Form Teacher
- The Year Head
- Guidance Counsellor/Care Team
- The Deputy Principal
- The Principal

5. Education and prevention strategies

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, 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*):

Ardscoil Rís Education and Prevention strategies include:

- 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. This is done in SPHE, CSPE and Religion classes in particular and in various theme weeks and days such as Stand Up Awareness week, Diversity week, Human Rights Day etc.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all students through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Students are provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions in a broad extra-curricular programme which includes sports, drama, chess, language clubs etc.
- The school continues to develop its whole staff professional development programme which includes an emphasis on student wellbeing, bullying, online safety etc.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours, and extracurricular activities. Non-teaching and support staff are 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. the research and development of a 6th year-1st year Buddy system, mentoring and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- The Anti-Bullying policy for the school will be included in student journals and displayed publicly in the school.
- The Schools Anti-Bullying Policy is discussed with students and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school.
- The school encourages a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. It is made clear to students that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- An acceptable Use Policy is in place which includes the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.

Implementation of curricula:

- The full implementation of the SPHE and CSPE curricula and RSE and Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes.
- 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 policies = Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, AUP etc.

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*):

Reporting bullying behaviour:

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
 - All reports will be investigated and dealt with.
 - Teaching and non-teaching staff will report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them.
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*):
 - In investigating and dealing with bullying, the 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 soon 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 pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
 - When analysing the 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.
 - If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first, thereafter if appropriate all those involved should be met as a group.
 - Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from other members of the group after the interview with 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 the parent(s)/guardian(s) an 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 engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him how he is in breach of the school's anti bullying

policy and efforts will be made to try to get him to see the situation from the perspective of the student being bullied.

- It will 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 parents, 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 factors into account:
 - whether the bullying has ceased and/or 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 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:

- 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:
 - All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher.
 - While all reports will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding the same.
 - A copy of these reports will be given to the Principal.

Formal stage 1: determination that bullying has occurred

1. If it is established with 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.

2. A copy of these reports must be given to the Principal.
3. All records of alleged bullying behaviour will be kept in a filing cabinet in the Principal's office. The Principal and Deputy Principal will have access to these reports.

Formal stage 2: Appendix 3 (from DES Procedures)

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 has occurred; and
- b. The school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. These behaviours, in line with the Code of Behaviour, can include:
 - Intimidation or aggression – verbal or physical
 - Fighting
 - Assault
 - Use of cameras on phones.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the Principal.

Established intervention strategies

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions.
- No blame approach
- Restorative justice

7. 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 self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
 - Pastoral care system
 - Buddy/Peer monitoring system
 - Tutor/Year Head system
 - Care team

- If pupils require counselling or further support the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise the 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.

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 revised and adopted by the Board of Management of Ardscoil Rís on 21st November 2023.

11. This policy will be 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.

Mary Fox

Signed: _____

Mary Fox
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 20th June 2024

John McHugh

Signed: _____

John McHugh
Principal

Date: 20th June 2024

