Scoil Eoghain
Whole School Policy for Anti-Bullying

<u>Introduction</u>
In accordance with the requirement of the Education (Welfare) act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Scoil Eoghain has adopted the following Anti-Bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour . This policy fully complies with the requirement of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013.

<u>Policy Aims</u>
- To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To raise awareness of all types of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
- To develop procedures for investigating, monitoring and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with and through the various local agencies and clubs in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour.

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.
- 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.

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.
- Prejudice-related bullying. Children and young people may be seen as different because of their ethnicity, religion or culture, sexual orientation (perceived or actual), gender or transgender identity (perceived or actual).

Some children and young people are singled out because they are overweight, affluent, deprived, in care or young carers, or for a variety of other reasons. Sometimes the person bullying can't explain the reasons, they just see their target as 'different'. Bullying that is prejudice-related can include verbal assaults, offensive jokes or language, mockery and ridicule. Young children may use words without an understanding of their meaning.

Cyber Bullying
The emergence of Cyber Bullying as a worldwide issue among young people brings about a new set of challenges because online bullying may at times transcend to the school environment

Cyber Bullying is the use of emails, instant messaging, chat rooms or mobile phones or other forms of information technology to deliberately threaten, intimidate or harass someone. Cyber bullying can include things/actions such as making threats, sending insults and harassing others via information technology.
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. Any such negative behaviour 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.

Other types of Bullying behaviour that can occur among pupils are
- Physical aggression
- Intimidation
- Name Calling
- Damage to property
- Extortion.

No one person or group, whether pupil or staff should have to accept this type of behaviour. Bullying is a problem which many children encounter and one which is of great concern to parents and teachers. It is a problem which requires co-operation between the school and the parents in seeking solutions.

Our school recognises its role to promote inclusion and to foster a warm inclusive and bully free school environment.

Roles and Responsibilities
Staff:
- The class teacher has responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying. A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school.
- Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with our school's Anti Bullying Policy.
- Promote and sustain good behaviour.

Pupils:
- Report all incidents of bullying (If a child is being bullied or they know of another child being bullied – Tell someone)
- Follow school rules / Code of Conduct.
- Avoid any inappropriate behaviours which may be deemed as bullying.
- Be respectful and supportive to others.

Parents:
- Work in partnership with the school.
- Advise their children to report any concerns to a member of staff.
- Discourage any behaviour which might be considered as bullying.
- Co-operate with the school. If their child/children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth and point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.
- Keep up to date with the risks and dangers associated with the use of social media and attend information meetings organised by the school.
- Monitor the use of the internet by their children outside of school time.
- Ensure that age restrictions set by social network sites are adhered to.
- Accept their role in dealing with bullying behaviours which occur outside of the school so that they do not interfere with effective teaching and learning throughout the day.
- Be aware that there will always be conflicts between children. However, bullying is different to the normal conflicts which children have.

The **Education and Prevention Strategies** that will be used by the school are as follows
- The children will be made aware of what bullying is and that it is unacceptable behaviour through the Stay Safe Programme, Anti-Bullying Awareness Week each November, workshops for parents and Visiting Speakers etc. Education on Cyber Bullying is included in our SPHE programme.
- Realistic, firm and consistent guidelines to help the children control their behaviour.
- Raising awareness of the Rights and Responsibilities of all children.

- Ensuring that all staff (teaching and non teaching), parents, pupils and all members of the school community are aware of the Whole School Policy for Anti Bullying.
- Effective supervision – playground and general school environment.
- Different strategies for building self esteem are used e.g., Drama.
- Empathy, acceptance and respect for difference are encouraged. Positive attitudes towards others are also to be encouraged.

Procedures for Investigating, Follow-Up and Recording of Bullying Behaviour, Established Intervention Strategies and the school's Programme of Support for working with Pupils Affected by Bullying are as follows…

- The first task is to establish the facts.
- Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with alleged incidents of bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff, parents/guardians.
- In any reported allegation 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 all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- 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 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 Discipline and try to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view.
- In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, the teacher will speak with the parents or guardians of the two parties involved to (a) explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy, (b) discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions taken by the school.
- Teachers who are investigating cases of bullying behaviour will keep a written record of their discussions with those involved.

- ➢ All cases of bullying, will be noted, investigated and serious cases of bullying behaviour by pupils will be notified immediately to the Principal and recorded.
- ➢ Parents and pupils are required to cooperate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues.
- ➢ It is very important that all involved including each set of pupils and parents understand the above approach from the outset.
- ➢ Non-teaching staff e.g., classroom assistant, caretaker, secretary and cleaner are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, to the teaching staff.
- ➢ In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgment, take the following factors into account-
  - Whether the bullying behavior 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 parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

- Where cases, relating to either a pupil or a teacher remain unresolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the School's Board of Management (see Code of Discipline Policy dealing with gross misdemeanours).
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the schools' complaints procedures.
- In the event that the parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school may advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children

Incidents outside school
Bullying behavior can take place both inside and outside of school. Bullying which takes place outside of school can impact on the school day, and can have implications for the parties involved when they are at school. Examples of bullying which may occur outside of school may include incidents of cyber bullying, arguments at sports or any physical or verbal incidents which may occur outside of the school grounds.
Scoil Eoghain is unable to deal directly with incidents that occur outside the remit of school, that is, incidents that occur after the end of the school day, or those which occur outside of the school premises. Scoil Eoghain has a duty of care to all of its pupils encourages children not to 'suffer in silence' and would encourage parents to make the school aware of bullying incidents which happen outside of school. We will always listen to parental concerns and will be vigilant in school for any behavior which may be triggered by issues happening outside of school.

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.

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 Travelling community.

Review
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 published on the school website. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available if requested to the Patron and the Department.
The annual review by the Board of Management took place on the

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Signed: _____ Chairperson

Signed: _____ Board Member