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Scoil ÍosaS **Scoil Íosa Anti-Bullying Policy (Amendment January 2014)**

**Rationale**

This policy amendment was drawn up in response to the directive from the Minister for Education issued during Term 1 of the 2013/2014 school Year with specific instructions for the inclusion of provisions for dealing with cyber bullying as an addition to existing policy.

As with the existing school, policy, this policy amendment was drawn up in accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB). It fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools (September 2013). It was drawn up following consultation with the Board of Management and staff and has been made available to the parent body by way of the school website.

***Reference:***

The provisions of this policy are in conjunction with the principles of best practice, definitions of bullying and procedures as outlined in the ***Anti Bullying procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools (DES 2013)***

**Definition of Bullying** : As per existing policy.

Examples and manifestations of bullying behaviour are as outlined in the existing school policy on bullying behaviour as published in October 2012. At this juncture we add and make specific reference to ***Cyber Bullying.***

**Definition of Cyber Bullying**:

***The use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature*** (Oxford English Dictionary)

**Cyber-bullying**: This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person’s sexuality, appearance etc.

***(Anti Bullying procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools :DES (2013 p10)***

\**Please note that networking sites have a minimum age limit in order to register. We strongly recommend that children under the age of 13 do not register on social networking sites as directed by Children Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) 1998.*

**Amended Responsibilities**

***Board of Management***

The Board of Management (BOM) 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
* 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
* Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based 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)

• On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy

***School Staff***

The school staff will foster an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance. Children’s self- esteem will be developed through celebrating individual differences, achievements, acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and manners and providing opportunities for success throughout the curriculum and school. Teachers will help pupils to develop empathy by discussing feelings and trying to put themselves in the place of others. Relationships with pupils will be based on mutual respect and trust so that pupils will have confidence in the school staff. Teachers will be vigilant, respond sensitively and caringly to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying and investigate all disclosed incidents of bullying. Any discriminatory or derogatory language will be tackled immediately – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or special educational needs.

Teachers will discuss the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy with the pupils and use behavioural management strategies, which focus on problem solving and enable pupils to take an active role in finding a solution to problems.

The formal curriculum of the school will also be used to educate all pupils against bullying behaviour. Anti-bullying issues may be raised through the Alive-O religion programme, and the Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme.

***Pupils***

*Bystanders are recognised as agents in the eradication of bullying.*

***Pupils are:***

* expected to be tolerant and to have mutual respect for each other and staff
* encouraged to use the strategies they have been taught in dealing with unwanted behaviour
* advised to always report incidents of bullying, whether they happen to themselves or others,
* to parents and teachers

***Parents***

***Parents should:***

* encourage positive behaviour and discourage negative behaviour both at home and at school
* encourage children to solve difficulties without resorting to aggression
* encourage children to share, to be kind, to be caring and to be understanding towards others
* discuss the school’s anti-bullying policy with their children
* support the school in its efforts to prevent and treat issues arising from proven incidents of bullying.

**Publishing and publicising the Anti-bullying Policy (including amendments)**

In order to ensure that Scoil Íosa is effective in tackling bullying this policy will be:

* Available in the office to parents and teachers.
* Promoted and published on the school website
* Referred to in school newsletters

**Procedures for dealing with bullying incidents**: As laid out in existing school policy.

**Note:** *Scoil Íosa policy decrees that taking of any electronic equipment to school by pupils which can be used to compromise or to bully any person attending the school is not permitted under any circumstances. This includes personal computers, Tablets, mobile or cell phones or any item which may contain cameras of any type. This clause is outlined in the school Behaviour and Discipline Policy (pp.10-11)*

This policy amendment was adopted by the BOM on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (date).

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Chairman, BOM) (Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review:

***January 2014***