Scoil Iognáid de Rís

Anti-Bullying Policy

Anti-Bullying

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School Profile

School Name   Scoil Iognáid de Rís, CBS Primary School.

School Address   Stephen Street, Kilkenny.

School Details

Scoil Iognáid de Rís is a voluntary Roman Catholic Primary School under the Trusteeship and the Patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST). The School is grant aided by the Department of Education and Skills and is a single sex (boys) school.

School Management

The Board of Management of Scoil Iognáid de Rís is a statutory board appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

Mission Statement

Inspired by its founder, Scoil Iognáid de Rís aims to provide Catholic education in the Edmund Rice tradition. The school endeavours to be a caring Christian Community which promotes to the best of its ability the personal, spiritual, physical and intellectual development of its students.

Ethos

As an Edmund Rice School, Scoil Iognáid de Rís seeks to promote the five key elements of an Edmund Rice School as espoused by the ERST Charter:

- Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values.
- Promoting partnership in the school community.
- Excelling in teaching and learning.
- Creating a caring school community.
- Inspiring transformational leadership.

Anti-Bullying

Introduction

1.   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 Scoil Iognáid de Rís 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

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.

3.   Definition of Bullying (Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools).

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.

4.   Investigating and dealing with bullying

The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying is the class teacher initially, and the Principal teacher thereafter if necessary. In the absence of the Principal the Deputy Principal will become the relevant person.

5.   Education and Prevention strategies

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identify based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:
- We will adopt a whole school approach where all have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying and an awareness of its negative impact.
- The school staff will promote and foster an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance.
- Children's self-esteem will be promoted through celebrating individual differences, acknowledging achievements, rewarding good behaviour and providing opportunities for success throughout the curriculum.
- The school's Code of Behaviour will be brought to the attention of all parents and pupils at the start of the school year. The rules and the reasons for them will be explained and discussed and will be referred to throughout the year as the need arises.

- Teachers will help children develop empathy by discussing feelings and encouraging children to put themselves in the place of others. Problem solving strategies will be explored with the children to help resolve conflict.
- Children are made aware that all forms of bullying is an unacceptable form of behaviour. This is done explicitly through the Stay Safe, Walk Tall and the RSE programmes (cf. SPHE plan). Regular school assemblies will be used to reinforce this. Opportunities also will be availed of in Religion, Drama, P.E. and Sport.
- Teachers will engage children in group activities which will encourage them to work together, co-operate, listen to and respect one another's views e.g. annual cake sale, project work, debating, sport, choir, Green School Committee, Traffic Warden, quiz teams, trips.
- We will ensure that comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures are in place, to include incident, accident and welfare recording.
- We will educate pupils on appropriate online behaviour, raising awareness of cyber-bullying and its implications. We will invite guest speakers and use promotional events such as competitions, posters and a whole school approach from 2nd to 6th class. We will also educate the pupils on the appropriate use of mobile phones and the dangers associated with their mis-use.

6.   Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying

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). The school's procedures must be consistent with the following:

  i.   The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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);

  ii. 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;

  iii. **All reports**, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. 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;

  iv. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners are expected to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

  v.   Parents 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 quickly as possible;

vi. It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;

vii. Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;

viii. Incidents are **generally** best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the **privacy** of all involved;

ix. All interviews should 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;

x. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of **what**, **where**, **when**, **who** and **why**. This should be done in a **calm manner**, **setting an example** in dealing effectively with a conflict in a **non-aggressive** manner;

xi. If a **group is involved**, each member should be **interviewed individually at first**. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;

xii. Each member of a group should be supported through the **possible pressures** that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;

xiii. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);

xiv. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should 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 should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils;

xv. Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him how he is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;

xvi. It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation **where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his parents and the school;**

xvii. 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. This can have a therapeutic effect;

xviii. In cases where the relevant teacher 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, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at **Appendix 3** (See Section 6.8.10 (iii));

xix. In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:

- o Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
- o Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as **is practicable**;
- o Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
- o Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;

xx. 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 school's complaints procedures;

xxi. In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's **complaints procedures** and is still not satisfied, the school **must advise the parents** of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children. (Please refer to "**Dealing with Concerns and Complaints**" page 11 of the school's Code of Behaviour Policy.)

7.   Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

The Board of Management must ensure that the school has **clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour** and these must be documented in the school's **anti-bullying policy**. All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour must adhere to the following:

i. While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;

ii. If it is established by 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.

iii. The relevant teacher must 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 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.

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at **Appendix 3** must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at **Appendix 3** does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

8.   The School's programme of support

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations. Therefore, various approaches and intervention strategies may be used, including suggesting that parents seek referrals to appropriate outside agencies in order to receive further support for the pupils and their families, if needed. The following strategies may be used.

a. The classroom teachers will liaise with the principal, deputy principal, and where applicable, Special Education teacher and SNA, to provide **informal** counselling/support for the individuals.

b. Classroom teacher will give pupils opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills e.g. through SPHE, Circle Time, Anti-Bullying Campaigns etc.

c. As per Child Protection Guidelines, if the teacher feels that there is a Child Protection issue, a referral will be made to the DLP/DDLP.

d. Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

9.   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.

10.   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.

11.   This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on: 19/09/2022.

12.   This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Council. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the Patron if requested.

13.   This policy and its implications 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' Council. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Patron and the Department.

Signed: _____   Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management   Principal/Secretary to the
                                            Board of Management

Date: 19/09/2022   Date: 19/09/2022

Date of next review: September 2023

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Appendix 2 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 absent.
- 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.

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Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. **Name of pupil being bullied and class group**   Name _____   Class_____

2. **Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour**

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. **Source** of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. **Location** of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

5. **Name of person(s) who reported** the bullying concern

6. **Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) ***

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

7. **Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:**

Homophobic		Membership of Traveller community		Racist	
Disability/SEN related				Other (specify)	

8. **Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact**

9. **Details of actions taken**

Signed: _____   (Relevant Teacher)   Date: _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal   Date: _____

* **Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.
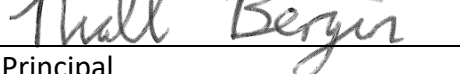
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Appendix 4 Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

	Yes/No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed: _____   Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management   Principal

Date: _____19/09/2022_____   Date: _____19/09/2022_____

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