



## Anti-Bullying Policy

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 Ursula 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 pupils 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; and
- 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 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;

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

**(g) Supports for staff**

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

**(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 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.

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

- **Physical aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
- **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.
- **Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore"(implied or stated); a group ganging up against one





person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".

- **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.
- **Name calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.
- **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
- **Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

#### Examples of bullying behaviours

<p><b>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.</li> <li>• Physical aggression</li> <li>• Damage to property</li> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Slagging</li> <li>• The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person</li> <li>• Offensive graffiti</li> <li>• Extortion</li> <li>• Intimidation</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insulting or offensive gestures</li> <li>• The “look”</li> <li>• Invasion of personal space</li> <li>• A combination of any of the types listed.</li> </ul>
<b>Cyber</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Denigration:</b> Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation</li> <li>• <b>Harassment:</b> Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual</li> <li>• <b>Impersonation:</b> Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name</li> <li>• <b>Flaming:</b> Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</li> <li>• <b>Trickery:</b> Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online</li> <li>• <b>Outing:</b> Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</li> <li>• <b>Exclusion:</b> Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</li> <li>• <b>Cyber stalking:</b> Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety</li> <li>• Silent telephone/mobile phone call</li> <li>• Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls</li> <li>• Abusive text messages</li> <li>• Abusive email</li> <li>• Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles</li> <li>• Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures</li> <li>• Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</li> </ul>
<p><b>Identity Based Behaviours</b>  <b>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation</b> (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).</p>	
<b>Homophobic and Transgender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation</li> <li>• Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation</li> <li>• Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner</li> <li>• Physical intimidation or attacks</li> <li>• Threats</li> </ul>
<b>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background</li> <li>• Exclusion on the basis of any of the above</li> </ul>
<b>Relational</b>	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malicious gossip</li> <li>• Isolation &amp; exclusion</li> <li>• Ignoring</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excluding from the group</li> <li>• Taking someone's friends away</li> <li>• "Bitching"</li> <li>• Spreading rumours</li> <li>• Breaking confidence</li> <li>• Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear</li> <li>• The "look"</li> <li>• Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching</li> <li>• Harassment</li> </ul>
<b>Special Educational Needs, Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.</li> <li>• Mimicking a person's disability</li> <li>• Setting others up for ridicule</li> </ul>

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are all the teachers in the first instance with follow-up where necessary from the Principal and Deputy Principal, who also act as DLP and Deputy DLP

**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:

*'At the centre of a whole school response to bullying is the creation of a positive school climate which focuses on respect for the individual...'* (Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 1993)

#### **Positive school culture and climate**

- A cornerstone in the prevention of bullying is a positive school culture and climate that is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity and respect. Scoil Ursula promotes a positive school climate which encourages respect, trust, care, consideration and support for others.
- Central to our positive school culture is respectful relationships across the entire school community. This encompasses relationships amongst peers (e.g. pupil to pupil, teacher to teacher) and relationships between groups (e.g. teachers and pupils, parents and teachers etc.).
- We challenge the misconception that bullying is a normal phase of development and that it teaches pupils to toughen up. The school endeavours to create an environment where pupils





feel comfortable and free to discuss and disclose incidents of bullying. We explicitly teach pupils to realise that they also have a responsibility for the safety and welfare of fellow pupils.

- Scoil Ursula encourages open dialogue between all school staff and pupils. We provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to raise their concerns in an environment that is comfortable for the pupil. Pupil surveys are carried out periodically to gauge the level of pupils' feelings of safety and happiness at school and to ascertain if they or others feel threatened by pupil behaviour towards them.
- The key elements of our positive school culture and climate are outlined as follows:
  - ✓ The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
  - ✓ The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
  - ✓ The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
  - ✓ The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
  - ✓ The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
  - ✓ The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.
  - ✓ The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
  - ✓ The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
  - ✓ The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.
  - ✓ The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.
  - ✓ The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying and the school has a close working relationship with our Community Garda Youth Liaison Team.
  - ✓ The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
  - ✓ The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
  - ✓ Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

### **Effective leadership**

- Scoil Ursula endeavours to provide effective leadership through its Principal, Deputy Principal, Special Duties Post-Holders and Board of Management supporting a school culture and climate that celebrates difference. All those in leadership roles within the school play their part in stimulating a school-wide approach to preventing and tackling bullying.
- The Principal uses his position of influence to affect attitudes and set standards in dealing with bullying behaviour. Principals and other leaders in the school, including all teachers, strive to engender an ethos under which bullying is unacceptable. All who are identified as leaders within the school community ensure that practical steps are taken to challenge and respond





to bullying. School leaders also involve both staff and pupils in developing and implementing a vision of the school where diversity is accepted and celebrated.

- As pupils model their behaviour on that of adults, so all staff members are careful to act as good role-models and are fair, firm, clear and consistent in their disciplinary measures.
- Scoil Ursula has adopted the Teaching Council's *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers* as its benchmark in relation to the values and standards expected of teachers in their daily work with pupils.
- The adults in the school have a responsibility to model the school's standards of behaviour, in their dealings both with pupils and with each other, since their example is a powerful source of learning for pupils. Parents are also expected to model the standards that pupils are asked to respect. In order to do this, they are made familiar with the standards and encouraged to understand the importance of expecting pupils to behave according to these standards. The ways in which parents and teachers interact provide pupils with a model of good working relationships.

### **A school-wide approach**

- Scoil Ursula employs a school-wide approach to dealing with the problem of bullying behaviour. Bullying behaviour affects not only those immediately involved. It can affect everyone in the classroom, in the school and, ultimately, in the wider community.
- A positive school-wide attitude and involvement assists us in countering bullying behaviour in our school. In addition to the role of management and staff, parents and pupils have a role and responsibility in helping the school to prevent and address school-based bullying behaviour and to deal with any negative impact within school of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere. Parents are encouraged to recognise that a school that openly discusses bullying is acting positively and that they need to work with the school to ensure there is a coherent, school-wide approach to tackling the issue.
- Bullying behaviour thrives in an atmosphere of uncertainty and secrecy in which the pupil often feels a sense of hopelessness and futility against the power being exercised by the person engaged in bullying behaviour. We strive to provide a high degree of school-wide vigilance and openness to ensure that bullying behaviour can be adequately tackled.
- We promote relevant home/school/community links as a tool to countering bullying behaviour and this has become a normal part of the school's effective operation. While we recognise that we have no jurisdiction over incidents that occur outside the school, if we become aware of such incidents, we reserve the right to become involved in cautioning pupils against such behaviour and informing parents where necessary. In this regard we encourage those members of the wider community who come directly in daily contact with school pupils (school bus drivers, school traffic wardens and local shopkeepers) to play a positive role in assisting us to counter bullying behaviour by reporting such behaviour to parents and/or to the school as appropriate. Through this approach, a network is formed.
- In certain cases, however, it may be necessary for the school to seek the assistance of other local persons and formal agencies such as NEPS, HSE social workers, community workers, Gardaí etc.

### **Implementation of education and prevention strategies including awareness raising**

- Scoil Ursula promotes a preventative approach to bullying as an integral part of our anti-bullying policy.
- Effective practice we employ includes prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying and involves strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. We teach strategies to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.





- As self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour, Scoil Ursula, through both curricular and extra-curricular programmes, provides pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.
- Scoil Ursula provides programmes focused on developing pupils' awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects, which deal with the issue of identity-based bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying. Pupils in the senior classes are taught not to use homophobic or transphobic terms as a means of insult or abuse.
- Scoil Ursula believes that the best way to address cyber-bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. Pupils are educated on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. Web-wise is used as a tool for teaching appropriate Internet use and all pupils and parents sign up to our Acceptable Use Policy. The school-wide approach and the role of parents is emphasised in this regard. Through our Broadband Filtering Network and our mobile phone policy the scope for cyber-bullying to occur as a result of access to technology from within the school is minimised. The school website and Class blogs are moderated by teachers to ensure that no hurtful comments are posted. Attempts by pupils to do so are reported to parents. Parents are discouraged from allowing their children to use Facebook and other such social networking sites on grounds of lower age limits which preclude Primary school children from using them. Since these sites cannot be accessed at school, incidents of Cyber-Bullying occurring on them are outside the remit of the school. However, if we become aware of incidents of Cyber-Bullying outside of school, we reserve the right to become involved in cautioning pupils against such behaviour and informing parents. Children, parents and the school community are made aware through anti-bullying lessons and whole school communication that placing a once-off hurtful or offensive message, picture or statement on a public forum such as a social networking site or group messaging app is considered under DES guidelines to be bullying behaviour.
- Programmes that we use as prevention measures in the above areas include Alive-O, SPHE Programme, Stay Safe, Restorative Justice, Walk Tall, RSE Programme, WebWise and the Anti-Bullying Campaign Tools for Teachers. These curriculum components and programmes are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. There is also space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. In English, there is a wide range of literature available which could be used to stimulate discussion. In SPHE, the interdependence of people in communities at local, national and international levels is stressed. In Geography and History references to colonisation, exploitation and dictatorships are used to illustrate the negative aspect of power. This work is also extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama, and Physical Education. Co-operation and group enterprise is promoted through Student Council, team sports and school clubs as well as through practical subjects. Sporting activities in particular provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression.
- In Scoil Ursula, our approach to tackling and preventing bullying takes particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN. Our SEN Team in conjunction with the other staff members use approaches which include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social, personal and safety skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.





### **Supports for staff**

- The Board of Management provide copies of the school's anti bullying policy to members of school staff to ensure that they have sufficient familiarity with it to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy when required. Anti-Bullying policy and practices are included on Staff Meeting agenda. It is hoped that DES will provide the necessary in-service supports for staff appropriate to their role to enable them to recognise bullying, implement effective strategies for preventing bullying and where appropriate, intervene effectively in bullying cases.
- The Board of Management also make appropriate arrangements to ensure that temporary and substitute staff have sufficient awareness of the school's code of behaviour and its anti-bullying policy.

### **Roles & Responsibilities of Pupils & Parents**

#### **Pupil who is being bullied:**

- Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon!
- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is WRONG!
- Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
- Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
- Be assertive - shout "No!" Walk confidently away. Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.
- Fighting back may make things worse. If you decide to fight back, talk to a teacher or parent/guardian first.
- Generally, it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support. The teachers will take you seriously and will deal with bullying in a way, which will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you.

#### **Pupil who sees or knows someone is being bullied:**

- TAKE ACTION! Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel unhappier and on their own.
- If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult IMMEDIATELY. Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble.
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.

#### **Parents**

- Look for unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard.
- Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has gone, who they have spent their time with, how lunchtime was spent etc.
- If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the School immediately. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse!
- Tell your own son or daughter there is nothing wrong with him or her. It is not his or her fault that they are being bullied.



- Make sure your child is fully aware of the School Anti-Bullying Policy concerning bullying, so that they will not be afraid to ask for help.

Try not to over-emphasise negative incidents that occur to your child at school. You may over-sensitise your child to experiences that are part of socialisation and impair his/her ability to develop interpersonal skills and coping mechanisms. A certain amount of negative experience is a normal part of growing up and in ordinary everyday school life, all children will experience some fallings out with their fellow pupils. It is important not to label such events as bullying to your child until the school can establish this conclusively. Your child may develop a victim mentality and see even the most trivial incidents as bullying and this may have a damaging impact on their integration and social interactions with friends and schoolmates. Premature labelling of behaviour as 'bullying', can also have a far-reaching impact on those children who are unfairly labelled as 'bullies'. In the vast majority of cases, a quiet word to the Class Teacher from a concerned parent will result in the issue being resolved promptly and fairly to everybody's benefit.

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:

#### **Investigation**

- 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);
- Teachers, who are investigating cases of bullying keep a factual, written record of their discussions with those involved;
- 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;
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will 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 is made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly;
- Non-teaching staff such as secretary, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
- 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;
- It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
- Teachers take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- Incidents are generally investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- All interviews are 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 relevant teacher seeks answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This is to 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 is interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved are met as a group. At the group meeting, each member is asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- Each member of a group is supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
- At the teacher's discretion, 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 parents of the parties involved are 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;
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it is made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and every effort is made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- It is 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 or her parents and the school;
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved are 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 is in keeping with our Restorative Justice approach and can have a therapeutic effect;
- 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 is recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at **Appendix 1 on Aladdin**
- 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:
  - 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; and
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents are referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

### **Recording**

All records are maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour adhere to the following:





- 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;
- 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.
- The relevant teacher will use the recording template at **Appendix 1 on Aladdin** 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
  - b) where the relevant teacher deems the situation to be of a severity to be 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 1 on Aladdin** must be completed in full and a copy 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 1 on Aladdin** 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.

#### **Stages for Dealing with Incidents of Bullying:**

In accordance with the Scoil Ursula Code of Behaviour bullying is regarded as a grave offence and is a serious breach of our code. As such, where all the above reasonable avenues of intervention fail to prevent recurrence of bullying behaviour, steps will be taken to remedy the problem up to and including suspension and/or expulsion. The disciplinary steps are along the following lines:

1. Pupils responsible for bullying behaviour will be informed of the school's policy on bullying, reprimanded appropriately and warned against a recurrence and its consequences. It will also be explained to them the impact their behaviour is having on the victim's and others' happiness and learning in an effort to appeal to their better nature to stop. This will be done by the relevant teacher, who will also deal with the theme of bullying at class level in SPHE/Religion.
2. Where the bullying behaviour persists, the relevant teacher will refer the matter on to the Principal or Deputy Principal who will meet with the pupils concerned. Pupils engaging in bullying behaviour will be given an opportunity to amend their behaviour. This will be done in an atmosphere of making things better rather than apportioning blame and imposing punishment.
3. Should the bullying behaviour continue, then some sanctions may be employed such as withdrawal of privileges e.g. Golden Time, sporting events, buddy system, school excursions etc.
4. A letter will go home to the parents/guardians of the child(ren) engaging in bullying behaviour outlining the nature of the behaviour and requesting their help to resolve the issue.
5. The parents will be called in to meet the principal to discuss the matter with a view to ending the behaviour.
6. Depending on the severity of the continued behaviour, if it is felt that the safety of the victim cannot be guaranteed, the principal may bring the matter to the Board of Management with





a view to resolving the issue through suspension and/or expulsion when all other avenues of resolution have failed.

As each case is different, the above steps are a general guideline and steps may be combined, repeated or skipped on a case to case basis at the discretion of the teachers or principal. At all times Restorative Practices will be employed.

### **Restorative Justice**

Where we feel that damage resulting from bullying behaviour is such that it is difficult for the victims to re-engage with the bullies in a normal relationship and/or reintegrate into the school environment appropriately, we may employ Restorative Justice strategies. Restorative Justice constitutes an innovative approach to offending and inappropriate behaviour which puts repairing harm done to relationships and people over and above the need for assigning blame and dispensing punishment. A restorative approach in a school shifts the emphasis from managing behaviour to focussing on the building, nurturing and repairing of relationships.

### **Bullying as part of a continuum of behaviour**

Scoil Ursula acknowledges that bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. As such this policy provides for referral to be made to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate. In cases where we have serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) will be sought.

### **Referral of serious cases to the HSE**

- In relation to bullying in schools, *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011* (Children First) and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* provide that in situations where "the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school will consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan".
- Serious instances of bullying behaviour will, in accordance with the Children First and *The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.
- The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person will seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.



7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- General programmes of support for pupils who have been bullied. Such pupils benefit from opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.
- A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities are developed to increase feelings of self-worth. Learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour need help to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.
- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour are encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

Such programmes for working with pupils affected by bullying are provided by relevant teachers and in some cases the help of the SEN Team may be sought to provide behavioural and socialisation programmes as appropriate.

#### 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.

- Scoil Ursula ensures that good supervisory and monitoring measures are in place both to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour.
- The Deputy Principal draws up Supervision Rotas to ensure that pupils are adequately supervised during break-times. Problem areas and times are identified and monitored closely.
- All pupils and in particular senior pupils are a resource to assist in countering bullying. Our Student Council plays an active role in monitoring and reporting.
- Non-teaching staff also contribute and are an essential part of the process to counter bullying behaviour in our school.





### 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 23<sup>rd</sup> of November, 2021].

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). 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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed:

M. Moore

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed:

Tony Galley

(Principal)

Date:

23/11/2021

Date:

23-11-21

Date of next review: 18<sup>th</sup> of October, 2022.



Appendix 1 Template for recording bullying behaviour (template on Aladdin)

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

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

Empty box for recording names and classes of pupils 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

Empty box for recording the name of the 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	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	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 \_\_\_\_\_

**\* 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.