

CYBER BULLYING POLICY

RATIONALE

Cyber Bullying is an issue for families, the community and society in general. Schools are a cog in the wheel. Schools can make a meaningful contribution but parents ultimately must assume responsibility for the actions of their children. It is the task of parents to supervise and teach their children in relation to cyber bullying and its consequences. This is an issue for families, the community, society and schools.

Cyber Bullying is a new phenomenon and should be treated as high priority. It may be argued that cyber bullying is taking place outside the school gates; the reality is that the impact of this activity, in a lot of cases, is being felt inside the school gates. Cyber Bullying must be understood as a behaviour issue, not a technology problem.

Guidelines are currently being prepared by the Department of Education and Skills on bullying. This report will include all types of bullying and recommends 16 immediate actions schools can take and 16 immediate actions parents can take. These will be issued to schools for the new academic year 2013/2014. In the meantime our school community is drafting a policy at present in consultation with all stakeholders and will be reviewed next year when the guidelines are published.

AIMS OF POLICY

The Staff of Scoil Chroí Naofa aim

- To teach the children the knowledge and skills to be able to use ICT effectively, safely and responsibly
- To ensure that the children are safe and feel safe from bullying, harassment and discrimination.
- To help the victim harmed to feel safe again.
- To hold the bully to account, so as to recognise the harm caused and not to repeat the behaviour.
- To hold bystander bully to account also.
- To ensure that pupils, staff and parents understand what cyber bullying is and how it can be combated
- To ensure that practices and procedures are agreed to prevent incidents of cyber bullying of pupils and staff.
- To demonstrate that cyber bullying, as any other form of bullying, is unacceptable and that the school has effective ways of dealing with it.
- To ensure that reported incidents of cyber bullying are dealt with effectively and quickly.
- To educate and upskill staff and parents on Cyber Bullying and privacy settings.

DEFINITION OF CYBER-BULLYING?

Bullying is something that can happen to anyone, anywhere, any time and in any way. For many children, home is no longer a safe haven from bullying. Bullying is wrong, hurtful, and done on purpose.

Cyber bullying is bullying that is carried out using information and communication technology such as emails, mobile phones, instant messaging, online polling sites, online gaming sites, chat rooms, social networking sites and blogs. Bullying, and cyber bullying, is behaviour that is repeated over time and which sets out deliberately to hurt, embarrass, harass and intimidate another person. It can include threats, intimidation, harassment, cyber-stalking, vilification, defamation, exclusion, peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorized publication of private information or images etc. There are many types of cyber-bullying as follows:

1. **Text messages** - can be threatening or cause discomfort.
2. **Picture/video-clips via mobile phone cameras** - images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed
3. **Mobile phone calls** - silent calls, abusive messages or stealing the victim's phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible
4. **Emails** - threatening or bullying emails, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else's name
5. **Chat room bullying** - menacing or upsetting responses to children when they are in a web-based chat room

6. **Instant messaging** - unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online using MSM (Microsoft Messenger), Yahoo Chat or similar tools
7. **Bullying via websites** - use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal 'own web space' sites such as You Tube, Facebook, Ask.fm, Bebo, Myspace and others.
8. **Personal intimidation** includes sending abusive, threatening messages
9. **Impersonation:** setting up fake profiles attributed to the victim
10. **Exclusion:** involves blocking an individual from a popular group
11. **Personal humiliation:** involves posting images or videos intending to embarrass or humiliate somebody
12. **False reporting:** is behaviour involving making false reports to a service provider or reporting others for a range of behaviours with a view to having the user's account or website deleted.

Other behaviours that constitute Cyber Bullying:

- **Flaming:** sending angry rude messages about a person to a group.
- **Online Harassment;** offensive messages via electronic means.
- **Cyber Stalking:** threats of harm or behaviour that is excessively intimidating.
- **Denigration:** harmful cruel statements about a person to other people
- **Masquerade:** bully pretends to be someone else and sends messages that make another person look bad.
- **Outing exclusion;** sending private sensitive information
- **Happy Slapping/Hopping;** person walks up and slaps another while another captures it on camera and uploads it to the web.

AIMS OF POLICY CONTENT

- To encourage children to take responsibility for their words and actions online.
- To sensitise children to the impact that their words and actions can have online.
- To support children to appreciate the damaging and devastating consequences of cyber bullying on victims.
- To highlighting to children that there can be adverse consequences for those who engage in cyber bullying including the existence of permanent record of their actions which they may regret in the future.
- To advise children about what they should do if they experience cyber bullying.
- To provide clear procedures to combat Cyber Bullying i.e.
 - What is the school doing to prevent it?
 - What pupils can do?
 - What parents can do?
 - What teachers and other staff can do?
 - Who to contact in the event of a problem?
 - How incidences are handled?

WHAT THE STAFF CAN DO TO COMBAT CYBERBULLYING?

- All stakeholders share the understanding that bullying can be tackled by all members of the school community (pupils, staff and parents) working together in a consistent and systematic way.
- Our staff have adopted a whole school approach by creating a supportive environment where it is not acceptable to bully and where the ethos of the school is that it is "ok to tell".
- Our focus is not on the individuals directly involved but on creating a healthy system to prevent problems in the first place i.e. a shift in thinking from a problem based focus to a solution based emphasis.
- Our staff endeavours to create a friendly, positive, supportive atmosphere throughout the school.
- Staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management are made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying.
- A clear definition of cyber bullying is now established which clearly identifies unacceptable online conduct towards any person in the school community.
- This definition is clearly communicated to the entire school community.

- In the light of recent cyber bullying incidences our Code of Behaviour & Anti-Bullying Policy is currently being reviewed to include cyber bullying and racist bullying in consultation with all stakeholders.
- The prevention of cyber bullying is integrated as an essential part of the Code of Behaviour & Anti-Bullying Policy specifying that any usage of the internet, digital media or mobile phone which intrudes on the privacy and dignity of staff, pupils or their families is deemed a serious breach of the school Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Our policy states that any behaviour which endangers the health and safety of any member of the school community is treated with the utmost seriousness by the Principal and Board of Management and that such behaviour includes the inappropriate use of social media.
- Related policies are also being reviewed such as our E Learning Policy, Internet Acceptable Use Policy, Mobile Phone Policy and Child Protection Policy.
- Pupils in fourth class will continue to sign an Acceptable Use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) contract with their parents for the duration of their last three years in our school.
- The consequences of a breach of cyber bullying will be communicated to the whole community.
- Boards of Management will review the policy and its implementation on an annual basis and provide confirmation to the school community, and the Parents Council that it has been done so.
- Staff will redouble efforts to combat cyber bullying in light of incidences.
- Pupils will learn about cyber bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Stay Safe Programme, Friends for Life & Fun Friends Programmes, assemblies, Prayer Services, Friendship Week/Anti Bullying Week, Circle Time and other curriculum projects. Stay Safe Programme is taught every year from senior infants to sixth class. .
- Our school has just purchased the Prim-Ed pack for school entitled Bullying in a Cyber World from Junior Infant to Sixth class along with 12 posters. Teachers select lessons from these packs appropriate for the different classes.
- The three senior classes have been given a copy and a cd of the Webwise Programme for Primary School Teachers developed by the NCTE & PDST
- An anti Bullying week will take place early in the next school year to highlight an awareness of the types of bullying and how to prevent it.
- The school engages a speaker, Brendan Smyth from NUIG to facilitate workshops on cyber bullying for 5th and 6th class, staff and parents.
- The local Garda was also invited to speak about this new type of bullying. He will be available in the future at the request of the Principal.
- A speaker from the National Parents Council presented a seminar on Internet Safety to parents in the last school year..
- Parents are made aware of dangers through parent/teacher meetings, Code of Behaviour, Anti Bullying & CyberBullying Policies.
- Parents are reminded that no pupil under 14 years is permitted to register with Facebook; it is against the law. No pupil should register with the online forum Ask.FM as it operates under a cloak of anonymity and is registered in Latvia.
- Staff and pupils may be the victims of Cyber Bullying. Policy clearly outlines how the school deals with Cyber Bullying incidents of both pupils and staff members.
- Records are kept of all Cyber Bullying incidents and corresponding actions by the school.
- Staff continue to attend Professional Development Courses to assist them in learning about current technologies.
- Parents are advised to upgrade their IT skills also.

DEVELOPING SKILLS TO COMBAT CYBER BULLYING

Netiquette is the name given to the code of conduct which is associated with good practice when using the Internet. Parents and teachers should teach children netiquette skills from the beginning of their engagement with technology. The Golden Rules are as follows:

- get the children to think before they send emails or messages.

- start by making sure that messages are sent to the right place, that it arrives and that the right person gets it.
- care must be taken when sending messages to make them clear so that the receiver can clearly understand what we mean.
- do not attack others online or to say anything that would be considered insulting or rude.
- do not forward other peoples messages without their permission.

WHAT THE PUPILS CAN DO TO COMBAT CYBER BULLYING?

Bullying can be stopped and it can usually be traced.

- Don't ignore the bullying. Tell someone you trust, such as a teacher or parent or call an advice line.
- Try to keep calm. If you are frightened, try to show it as little as possible. Don't get angry, it will only make the person bullying you, more likely to continue.
- Don't give out your personal details online. Be careful of what you say about where you live, the school you go to, your email address etc. All these things can help someone who wants to harm you to build up a picture about you.
- Never open messages from someone you don't know.
- Always ask permission before revealing someone else's details.
- Only give details to trusted friends you know in real life.
- You can easily stop receiving text messages for a while by turning-off incoming messages for a couple of days. This might stop the person texting you by making them believe you've changed your phone number
- If the bullying persists, you can change your phone number. Ask your mobile service provider about this.
- Don't reply to abusive or worrying text or video messages.
- Your mobile service provider will have a number for you to ring or text to report phone bullying. Visit their website for details.
- Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images. Then you can show them to a parent or teacher as evidence.
- Record the time and date bullying messages or images were sent, and note any details about the sender
- Change your password often.
- Block the Sender by simply clicking the Block button. On some mobile phones you can restrict communications to an approved list of contact. Consult the manual for your phone or the Internet Safety section of the phone Service Provider for help with this. Mobile networks can't bar numbers but they will help change your phone number in the case of serious bullying.
- If you are experiencing difficulties on other social networking sites you should contact the site administrators directly for advice and assistance e.g. click on the link "report abuse" or www.facebook.com-help.
- Take control of the situation by reporting the problem to the people who can do something about it. Responsible websites and mobile phone operators provide ways for their users to report things such as bullying content, pornography and other offensive material.
- There's plenty of online advice on how to react to cyber bullying.

SUMMARY OF TIPS ON DOS AND DON'TS ABOUT CYBER BULLYING

- **Do** trust your instincts. If it doesn't look or 'feel right', it probably isn't.
- **Do** tell an adult you know and trust. You are not alone.
- **Do** keep messages that are sent from the cyber bully. You don't have to read it, but keep it. It is your evidence.
- **Don't** send messages when you are angry. Wait until you have had time to calm down and think. You will regret sending a 'Flame' (angry message) to someone else. Once you have sent a message it is VERY hard to undo the damage.
- **Don't** open messages from people you don't know.

- **Don't** reply to messages from cyber bullies. Even though you may really want to, this is exactly what cyber bullies want. They want to know that they've got you worried and upset. They are trying to mess with you and control you and put fear into you - don't give in to that.

GOLDEN STRATEGY for dealing with Cyber Bullying is **Stop! Block! Tell!**

- **STOP!** Don't do anything. Take 5! to calm down.
- **BLOCK!** Block the cyber bully or limit all communications. Do not reply.
- **TELL!** Tell a trusted adult. You don't have to face this alone.
- **REPORT** problem to website, mobile phone operator, garda, staff, parent, etc.

Key Advice for Victims

- **Stop!** Don't reply
- Keep the message
- **Block** sender
- **Tell** someone
- Report problems
- Report to website or mobile phone operator
- Report serious issues

A Victim's Strategies to deal with a Bully

- Try not to look upset or scared
- Stay calm and in control
- Be assertive
- Speak clearly and firmly
- Show confidence using positive body language
- Tell bullies you don't like what they are doing
- Tell the bully to stop
- Talk to trusted friends and ask for help
- Stay with friends
- Report it
- Keep away from bullies

Brendan Smith from N.U.I.G. recommended the following tips for children on the internet or texting entitled **Safebook**.

- Think before you post
- Only connect with your friends
- Don't share your password
- Be kind to others
- Keep your settings private
- Don't be hurtful towards others

He recommended the following tips for **friends of victims**;

- Don't stay silent
- Help your friend
- Report the bully
- Tell your parents
- Tell your teachers

Bystanders are bullies if:

- They join in with the bully
- Laugh with and cheer with the bully

- Copy what the bully is doing
- Show support for the bully
- Do nothing to stop the bully

Bystanders can stop the bully by

- Objecting to what the bully is saying or doing
- Showing support for the victim
- Not joining in
- Reporting the bully

Procedures in Reporting Cyber Bullying

- The school community is informed of clear channels of reporting cyber bullying.
- Pupils, parents and staff will be urged to report incidents of cyber bullying where relevant to the school.
- Teacher will report incident to Principal & Deputy Principal.
- All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated thoroughly, fairly and with an open mind with all parties i.e. victim and bully.
- Staff take into account the following key factors in the assessment of cyber bullying
 - Motivation - the perpetrator might not realise that his/her actions are bullying
 - Duration - how long the unacceptable behaviour continued
 - Evidence - the victim will have evidence of what happened
 - Coming clean at an early stage and attempting to make good any damaged caused
- Parents will be contacted and informed of incident.
- Decisions are made in consultation with parents on the best way to help the victim and the bully.
- Offending item is removed after having saved a copy.
- Sanctions are negotiated with parents.
- Principal ensures that the needs of the victim, bully and their parents are kept in mind when a serious instance of cyber bullying has occurred. Parents are kept informed until matter is resolved.
- Children involved will be monitored closely after incidents.
- Chairperson of Board of Management is informed (if serious).
- The police will be contacted if the incident is serious or in cases of actual or suspected illegal content.
- The HSE will be contacted if the Code of Behaviour & Anti Bullying Policy becomes ineffective and support is needed.
- Serious incidences without children's names will be included on the agenda of BOM meetings under Child Protection Item.
- Detailed reports are recorded and stored safely. If the matter is very serious and may merit suspension or expulsion, all files are kept open to parents, staff and pupils in the event of an appeal.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO TO COMBAT BULLYING?

Top Safety Tips for Parents

- Discover the Internet together
- Know your child's internet and phone use.
- Agree with your child rules for Internet use in your home
- It is important that children learn the netiquette informal code of contact on the internet:
 - Avoid hurting someone's feelings by email or other forms of electronic communication.
 - Respect other peoples online rights.
 - Avoid insulting someone.
 - Avoid crashing discussion groups or forums.
 - Respect the privacy of other people online and be responsible online.
- Encourage your child to be careful when disclosing personal information.

- Talk about the risks associated with meeting online "friends" in person
- Make your child know that you are there to listen and you are available to help them should they be involved in Cyber Bullying.
- Talk to your child about the hurt and harm that can be caused by cyber bullying and the consequences for everyone involved.
- Teach your child about evaluating information and being critically aware of information found online.
- Listen to your child, offer them your support without the threat of shutting down their online social life and help them put in place safer mobile and online behaviours. Responding to a negative experience by stopping their access to a mobile phone or internet might result in them being left out of the loop the next time this happens.
- Don't be too critical towards your child's exploration of the Internet
- Report online material you may consider illegal to the appropriate authorities
- Let your children show you what they like to do online.
- Encourage your child to show you which websites they are visiting.
- Register as a contact on your child's phone.
- Mobile operators in Ireland provide a dual access service. This service allows both parent and child to have access to the account records
- Remember that the positive aspects of the Internet outweigh the negatives.

Brendan Smyth from N.U.I.G. recommended the following tips for **parents and teachers**:

- Join Facebook and understand how it works.
- Teach safety and responsibility.
- Check the privacy settings.

He also informed the children of the following:

- An online comment is not a conversation, it's a publication.
- Your e-profile is part of your CV going forward and employers are now investigating future employees web presence.
- If you have a cyber-record with the law, you may be prohibited from getting visas to enter some countries as you are not employable by multi-nationals.
- If you receive a bully text etc, take a screen shot and save.
- If someone is bullying you on Facebook, you can go on to their page and unblock them or report them from there.
- Don't share your passwords and change them at different intervals too.
- Motto: think before you click.
- Know who your e-pals are.
- If you send an inappropriate message or photo in a private chat forum you are not guaranteed privacy as the receiver can copy it and send it on.
- Look out for changes in your friend's behaviour.
- Parents can have filters on children's phones as recommended on webwise.ie.

The following is in our current Code of Behaviour in dealing with general bullying:

If bullying behaviour is reported by pupil/s the following procedure applies:

1. Teacher listens and assesses the nature of the problem.
2. Teacher questions all children involved.
3. Teacher tries to resolve the situation.
4. Teacher reports incident to the Principal.
5. Children concerned are subsequently monitored closely in class and during recreation periods.
6. If problem persists, the children are informed that their parents will be requested to attend a meeting.
7. The relevant parents attend a meeting with the Principal and teacher/s. Parents are informed of incidents.

8. A meeting/a phone call will follow with the parents and the relevant teaching Staff to review progress and ensure that bullying behaviour has been stopped.
9. **If bullying behaviour is reported by a parent**, parent is required to make an appointment to meet the class teacher or the Principal. The procedure from no. 2 above will be followed

Resources for Help and Advice

1. The National Parents Council (Primary) Information/ Helpline to deal with the issue of bullying and cyberbullying in primary schools. Tel: 01 8874477 or email: helpline@npc.ie
2. *Get with IT - Guide to Cyberbullying* is a guide for parents produced by Webwise, the Office for Internet Safety and Barnardos to help parents understand the issue of cyberbullying and textbullying which is available to download. Webwise Parents Seminars.
3. Webwise, working with the National Parents Council Primary (NPC), have created an internet safety seminar for parents. Each seminar held in a school is presented by a National Parents Council facilitator and is 2.5 hours in duration.
4. Childline Tel: 1800-666666
5. Samaritans Tel:1850-609090

Useful Websites

www.spunout.ie
www.childnet.int.org
www.antibullying.net
www.kidsmart.org.uk/beingsmart
www.bbc.co.uk./schools/bullying
www.childline.ie/index.php/support/bullying/1395
www.chatdanger.com
<http://ie.reachout.com>
www.kidpower.org
www.sticksandstones.ie
www.abc.tcd.ie
www.wiredsafety.org

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- ♦ Staff review policies on a regular basis at staff meetings and planning days
- ♦ Meetings between parents and teachers can be arranged throughout the year if a problem arises
- ♦ Formal Parent Teacher Meetings takes place once a year.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff will review this policy in light of incidences that may arise, hence any amendments will take place

RATIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION

The Board of Management ratified this policy in November 2013.

REVIEW DATE

APRIL 2017

APPENDIX 1

CHILD'S REFLECTION ON MISBEHAVIOUR

Please answer the following questions. Take your time. Don't rush and think seriously about each of the questions. You have 1 hour to complete.

1. What did I do?
2. What is my side of the story?
3. Who did I hurt?
4. How did I hurt them?
5. What can I do to put things right for all the people I have hurt?
6. What have I learnt from this experience?
7. If this situation occurred again what would I do different?

APPENDIX 2

Scoil Chroí Naofa Anti Bullying Pledge 2017

Bullying is Wrong!

- I will not be a bully.
- I will be kind, gentle and respectful.
- I will treat everyone fairly.
- I will always be helpful and friendly.
- I will always tell the truth.
- I will not hurt anyone.
- I will not stop any child from playing with other children.
- I will tell an adult if I see someone being hurt.
- I will use my Power for Good.

APPENDIX 3

**Scoil Chroí Naofa`s
Anti Bullying Charter of Rights**

Bullying is kicking, hitting, pushing, taking and damaging belongings, name calling, taunting, mocking, offensive comments, making threats, excluding people, deliberately ignoring, gossiping and spreading rumours.

ALL MEMBERS OF OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY HAVE THE RIGHT TO

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• FEEL SAFE FROM HARM, BOTH INSIDE AND OUT OF SCHOOL.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• BE TREATED WITH RESPECT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• BE EDUCATED ABOUT THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF BULLYING

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REPORT BULLYING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KNOW HOW TO RESPOND TO INCIDENTS OF BULLYING AND TO BE ABLE TO TELL A TRUSTED PERSON IF SOMETHING WORRIES YOU
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HAVE ALL BULLYING CONCERNS DEALT WITH SENSITIVELY AND EFFECTIVELY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BE SAFE ON THE INTERNET AND TECHNOLOGY

APPENDIX 4

**Scoil Chroí Naofa` s
Anti Bullying Charter of Responsibilities**

Bullying is kicking, hitting, pushing, taking and damaging belongings, name calling, taunting, mocking, offensive comments, making threats, excluding people, deliberately ignoring, gossiping and spreading rumours.

ALL MEMBERS OF OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TREAT OTHERS WITH RESPECT AT ALL TIMES AND TO SET A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PREVENT AND REPORT BULLYING (OF YOU AND OF OTHERS) IN ALL ITS FORMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BEHAVE APPROPRIATELY AND UPHOLD SCHOOL VALUES BOTH INSIDE AND OUT OF SCHOOL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDERSTAND DIVERSITY AND RECOGNISE EVERYONE SHOULD BE TREATED WITH RESPECT REGARDLESS OF DIFFERENCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USE TECHNOLOGY APPROPRIATELY AND NOT USE IT AS A MEANS TO BULLY OTHERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RECOGNISE THE POTENTIAL RISKS OF USING TECHNOLOGY AND HOW THEY CAN BE AVOIDED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RESPECT PEOPLE` S PRIVACY