**GAELSCOIL THOMÁIS DÁIBHÍS**

**POLASAITHE**

**FRITHBHULAÍOCHTA**

**ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

**Gaelscoil Thomáis Dáibhís- 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 Gaelscoil Thomáis Dáibhís has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the schools' overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which was 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 positive school culture and climate which
* is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
* encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment;
* promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
* Effective leadership;
* A school-wide approach;
* A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
* Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
* build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils;
* explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying 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);
* On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3) Defining Bullying

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 are included in the definition of bullying:

* deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying- name calling, intimidation, isolation/exclusion, physical aggression, extortion, damage to property.
* cyber-bullying
* identity based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying 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) Relevant Teachers

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are:

* The Class Teacher(s) initially
* The Deputy Principal and if necessary thereafter
* The Principal

Any teacher may act as relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

5) Education and Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

Gaelscoil Thomáis Dáibhís adopts a **school-wide approach** to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community. The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlighting the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. In particular such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.

* Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in ‘telling’. 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.
* Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, i.e.:
* Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
* Hand note up with homework.
* Ask a parent(s)/guardian(s) to tell on your behalf.
* Ask a friend/peer to tell on your behalf.

Supervision and monitoring:

* Effective supervision and monitoring systems facilitate early intervention.
* Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, hall, playgrounds, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities.
* Non-teaching staff encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.
* Supervision also applies to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.

Professional Development:

* Professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils’ lives and the need to respond to it – prevention and intervention.
* Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s).
* Training available for staff based on Stay Safe.
* Training available for staff based on Internet Safety.
* Raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour by:
* The use of posters in the school promoting friendship and bullying prevention.
* The anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and is also available on the school’s website.

Promoting a positive sense of self-worth and building empathy and resilience in pupils:

* Random Acts of Kindness are encouraged
* Incidents of good and improved behaviour at a whole school level are rewarded.
* Extracurricular activities available for all pupils.
* Formal and informal interactions.

Cyber bullying:

* Promoting awareness of Gaelscoil Thomáis Dáibhís Acceptable Use Policy and ensuring that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils’ use of mobile phones.
* Communicating the message that unlike other forms of bullying, a once-off posting can constitute bullying.
* Advice will be communicated to help students protect themselves from being involved in bullying and to advise them on reporting any incidents. A telling atmosphere is created, so that pupils will report cyber bullying where they see it.
* Publicising ways of dealing with cyber bullying in the school.
* Don’t reply.
* Keep the message.
* Block the sender.
* Tell someone you trust.
* Promoting ‘Internet Safety Day’ annually and activities to celebrate this awareness.
* Information talks for parent(s)/guardian(s).
* Information talks for Rang 3-6.
* Training available for staff based on Internet Safety.
* Identify **clear protocols** to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.

Implementation of the curricula

* Teachers influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives. There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.
* The Stay Safe & RSE programmes at primary level are personal safety skills programmes which seek to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying.
* Gaelscoil Thomáis Dáibhís’s religious education programme emphasises respect for self and others. Various other social, health and media education programmes can further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour.
* The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
* The work may be extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama and Physical Education. Co-operation and group enterprise can be promoted through team sports, school clubs/groups, class projects ,as well as through practical subjects.
* The school policies which support the Anti-Bullying policy are:
* Code of Behaviour
* Child Protection Policy
* Supervision of pupils
* Acceptable Use policy
* Attendance
* Sporting activities
* Social Media policy

6) The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame). With this is mind, the school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school in dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are outlined below:

**Reporting bullying behaviour**

* Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to the relevant teacher in the school.
* A suspicion of bullying should be raised with the relevant class teacher first and then if necessary with the Principal.
* Parents are encouraged to make an appointment to speak with relevant class teacher if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
* All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
* Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

**Investigating and dealing with incidents:**

* In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant teacher will exercise his/her **professional judgement** to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
* Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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;
* Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach;
* Where possible, incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
* 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;
* 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;
* 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;
* Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;

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 parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved may 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 will afford parent(s)/guardian(s) the opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
* Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school’s anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
* It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school;

**Follow up and recording**

* 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;
  + Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s)s or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
* 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.
* Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school’s complaints procedures.
* In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school’s complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

**Recording of bullying behaviour**

* 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.
* The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix A**to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

1. 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
2. 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.

* When the recording template **Appendix A** is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal.
* The relevant teacher may consult with the Principal or Deputy Principal at any stage in relation to a case

7) 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 suggestions that parents seek referrals to appropriate outside agencies in order to receive further support for the pupils and their families if needed.

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 facilitate early intervention where possible.

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 \_\_\_\_\_ 2021.

11) This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. 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 and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Patron and the Department.

Signed: *Máire Uí Bhriain*, *Dónal Ó Murchú*

Chairperson B.O.M. Príomhoide

Date:

Date of next review :