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Scoil Iósaf,
Caisleán Nua Thiar,
Co. Luimní
Principal: Emily Stack White
Deputy Principal: Ann Marie White

Scoil Iósaf

Anti-Bullying Policy

Uimhir Rolla 12975N

The Scoil Iósaf community believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore it does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the wellbeing of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrators(s).

An 'Anti-Bullying Team,' made up of staff members, exists to cultivate an environment free from bullying.

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using a "Reform, not Blame" approach.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, in or outside the school, involving members of the school community they should notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

Pupils' participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB and guided by Cinéaltas: Action Plan on Bullying, the Board of Management of Scoil Iósaf 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 wellbeing 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;

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(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;

(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, transphobic 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.

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Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Indications of Bullying:

The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school e.g. requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school;
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, 'mitching', 'ditching.'
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- Pattern of physical illnesses e.g. headaches, stomach aches;
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g. stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting.
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers.
- Possessions missing or damaged.
- Increased requests for money or stealing money.
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing.
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

Examples of bullying behaviours

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • The "look"

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	• Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
Cyber	• **Denigration**: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation • **Harassment**: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • **Impersonation**: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name • **Flaming**: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • **Trickery**: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • **Outing**: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • **Exclusion**: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • **Cyber stalking**: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology
Identity Based Behaviours **Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation** (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).	
Homophobic and Transgender	• Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
	• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour,

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Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include: • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • "Bitching" • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The "look" • Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way
Sexual	• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	• Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person's disability • Setting others up for ridicule

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4. *The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:*

The Principal Teacher.
The Deputy Principal
All Class teachers
Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

5. The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows
School-wide approach

- Incredible Years In-service for all Staff
- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- Committees in the school (Student Council, Wellbeing committee, Green school Committee, Active Committee) ensure every pupil in Scoil Iósaf has a voice, feels welcomed, valued and understood.
- Annual celebrations and initiatives like Wellbeing Week, Anti-bullying/Friendship Week, European Week, International Day, Lust for Life Programme, Odd socks day, Autism awareness day etc. help everyone to work together towards a diverse and inclusive school environment where difference is valued and celebrated.
- A positive and welcoming school environment for the whole school community created by leaders within the school.
- An inclusive school community connected to society i.e. busking at Christmas, singing for the local nursing homes at Christmas, trips to the local library/fire station, spring clean around the school, nature appreciation and conservation walks with Geoff Hunt.
- Scoil Iósaf assigns Emma McEnery(APII) the role to promote wellbeing, and in particular, to lead on measures to prevent and address bullying in our school as outlined in Cineáltas Implementation Plan 2023-2027
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Whole staff 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.

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- An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- Anti-bully/Friendship week utilised to educate our school community about bullying and all of its forms and also to familiarise pupils, staff and parents with Scoil Iósaf's Anti-bullying Policy. We also focus on Friendship and take part in activities to build children's connections within their class and the school community
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
    - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
    - Hand note up with homework.
    - Bucket filler/Worry box
    - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
    - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
    - Pupils are helped to develop empathy by discussing feelings and by trying to put themselves in the place of others.

- Clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied have been developed.

- Our Acceptable Use Policy and Mobile Phone Policy in the school ensures that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.

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Implementation of curriculum

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes and Walk Tall, Zippy's Friend and Friends for Life, Lust for Life (3rd – 6th).
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme etc.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- 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 school will implement the advice in "Sexual Orientation advice for schools" (RSE Primary, Busy Bodies)

The following policies support and foster an anti- bullying school environment.
Code of Behaviour, Child Protection policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance, Health and Safety.

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;

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

The primary aim 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);
Every effort is made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- 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

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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 will be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;

- 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 will 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 give parent(s)/guardian(s) an 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 s will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- It will 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 will, 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 will be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is

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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) will 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 will advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents are done in an objective and factual manner.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred

- All teaching staff will keep a record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them on Aladdin.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will keep a record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
- The relevant teacher will inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred

- 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 school in consultation with the relevant teacher/s has a protocol for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher.(Aladdin)

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher will use the recommended recording template on Aladdin (see Appendix) 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

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Principal as applicable.
The school has listed behaviours that must be recorded and reported immediately to the principal. These are in line with the school's code of behaviour.

Established intervention strategies

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s)s to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- The traditional disciplinary approach
- Strengthening the victim
- Mediation

7. A programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is part of the school's intervention process. 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. It is, therefore, important the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. Where pupils require counselling, the school will liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same for pupils affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour involved.

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.

- There are agreed appropriate monitoring and supervision practices in the school, reviewed annually in September and adapted as necessary.
- All bullying danger spots have been identified.

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- In relation to Acceptable Use Policy in the school the following issues have been addressed:
  - All Internet sessions supervised by a teacher.
  - The school regularly monitor pupils' Internet usage.
  - *Schools Broadband Programme has blocked all social networking sites on the basis that they waste time and take up too much of the bandwidth which is been provided for educational purposes only).*

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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 17/06/2024 [date].

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: Agnes O Sullivan.
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Emily Stack White
(Principal)

Date: 17/06/2024

Date: 17/06/2024

Date of next review: June 2025