Anti-Bullying Policy



2024 - 2025

Principal: Tony Riley **August' 2024- June' 2025** **Roll Number: 17479D**

Anti-Bullying Policy- Scoil Mhuire National School

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behavior guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire N.S. Lacken has **adopted the following Anti-Bullying Policy** within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behavior. 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 behavior:
    - A positive school culture and climate which
        - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
        - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
        - promotes respectful relationships across the school community.
    - Effective leadership
    - A school-wide approach
    - A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
    - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that
        - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and

- explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying, identity-based bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying.

- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
- Supports for staff (CPD , school management , outside agencies)
- 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. In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools **bullying is defined** as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behavior, 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:

- Physical aggression, damage to property, name calling and intimidation
- 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 behavior.

Negative behavior 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*.

Some examples of bullying are listed below:

Bullying Behaviours which Scoil Mhuire Lacken has identified as relevant to our context:

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 • 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 • 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
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, 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 • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • 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

4. The relevant teacher (s) for investigating and dealing with bullying in Scoil Mhuire are as follows. (as highlighted in Section 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools)

All Class & Support teachers in Scoil Mhuire Lacken.
The Principal of Scoil Mhuire Lacken

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyberbullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (also Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

School Wide Prevention Strategies:

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- Model respectful behavior to all members of the school community at all times.
- 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.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teachers

- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parents/guardians 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.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parents/guardians are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school on enrolment.
- The implementation of regular (e.g. per year) whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Anti Bullying Week and parents/guardians seminars organised by P/A.; annual student surveys during Friendship Week ; regular school assemblies by Principal or Assistant Principal.
- Encourage a culture of openness when reporting bullying, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'reporting bullying'. 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.
    - Make a phone call to the school
    - Anti-bully or Worry box?
    - Get a parent/guardian or friend to tell on your behalf.
    - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parents/guardians to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied (refer to grievance policy).The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.

Implementation of Curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes.
- Examples of school wide delivery of lessons on **Relational aggression** (Cool School Programme: A Friend in Deed, Friends for life), **Cyber Bullying** (#UP2US, Be Safe-Be Web wise, Think Before you Click, Let's Fight it Together, Web wise Primary teachers' resources), **Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying** (Growing up LGBT, Stand Up Programme, The Trust pack) **Diversity and Inter-culturalism,** The school should list every resource related to the SPHE curriculum, and make a list of supports.
- 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 consider the implementation of advice in "Sexual Orientation advice for schools" (RSE Primary, see booklet).

Links to Other Policies

The following is a list of school policies, practices and activities (some that may still be either in development or in the process of being updated) are particularly relevant to our anti-bullying procedures:

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Parent Complaints and Grievance Policy
- Attendance Policy
- School Tours Policy
- Swimming Policy
- Special Educational Policy
- Health & Safety Policy

6. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behavior and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behavior are as follows (see section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools p.28*).

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

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parents/guardians) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting the 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 (initially the classroom teacher).
- Teaching staff & Special needs assistants (SNAs must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant teachers will exercise their 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 in Scoil Mhuire Lacken 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.
- 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 nonaggressive 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 teachers that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give 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 teachers has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to her/him how she/he is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and code of behaviour.
- Every effort should be made to try to get her/him 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.
- Follow up meetings with the relevant parties involved may 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) have exhausted the school's complaints procedures and are 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 the Bullying Behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be 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 staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- The relevant teacher should inform other staff with a view to monitoring the situation at break times/tours etc.
- The relevant teacher must 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 must keep appropriate written records which will assist her/his efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- DATED FORMS NB
- The school in consultation with the relevant teacher/s should develop a protocol for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher.

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

- The relevant teacher must use the recording template attached to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstance:
    - only 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.
- All confirmed instances of bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Assistant Principal as applicable.
- The recording template must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal.
    - Teacher's records are retained in a secure space in the teacher's classroom. All report templates given to the Principal will be retained in the filing cabinet in the Principal's Office.

Established Intervention Strategies

The following education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that may be used by Scoil Mhuire Lacken are as follows: (Ref: Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

- 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/guardian to support school interventions.
- No Blame Approach.
- Circle Time.
- Restorative interviews.
- Restorative conferencing.
- Implementing questionnaires.
- Mediation.
- Anti - Bullying Policy.
- Effective Practice of prevention and awareness raising measures (use of programmes e.g. Anti-bullying Campaign, Smile Campaign, Friendship Week Walk Tall & Friends for Life).
- Curricular & extra-Curricular Activities promoting pupil's positive self –worth.
- Initiative & Programmes educating on Identity based bullying e.g. LGBT.

- Prevention & Awareness of Cyber Bullying - Safer Internet week (Use of Webwise Programme).
- Prevention Initiatives for Pupils with SEN.
- Raising Awareness within the wider community e.g. g Anti Bullying Campaign, Smile Campaign, Friendship Week.
- Teacher Supports in changing attitudes & implementation of the SPHE Curriculum

7. The schools programme of Support for working with children affected by bullying are as follows:

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience.
- If pupils require counselling or further supports, the school will endeavor to liaise with their parent(s)/guardians and advise them on the supports available. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.
- Learning strategies e.g. Stay Safe Programme applied within the school should allow for the enhancement of the pupil's worth.

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.

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 ground 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 12/12/2025.

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 (Appendix 4). 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 (Appendix 5). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: A. Riley **Principal**

Signed: John Donohoe **Chairperson of Board of Management**

Date: 12/12/2025

Date of next review: 29/09/2025

Appendix 1: Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times. Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.

Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.

Catch them being good-notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.

Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school- this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.

Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.

Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.

Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.

Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.

Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.

Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.

Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.

All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behavior.

Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.

School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying 'hot spots' and 'hot times' for bullying in the school.

Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.

Support the establishment and work of student councils.

Appendix 2: Sociogram Questionnaire A

Name:	Class: Date:
Do you want to talk to someone about bullying?	Yes No
Do you know someone who is having a hard time?	Yes No
Any other comments?	

Appendix 2: Sociogram Questionnaire B

Name	Class	Date
Is there anyone in class having a hard time or being picked on? Yes No		
Is anyone being left out, being unfairly treated or ignored? Yes No		
Is anyone spreading rumours, gossip, using notes, phone calls, text messages or emails to make others feel bad about themselves? Yes No If Yes, tell me more please.		
Have you been bullying anyone? Yes No		
Who are your friends?		
Are you being bullied in any way? Yes No If Yes, tell me more please.		
Is there a group of pupils making life difficult for others? Yes No If Yes, tell me more please.		
Are pupils from other classes giving anyone in this class a hard time? Yes No If Yes, tell me more please.		

A copy of all completed questionnaires will be given to the Principal

- **Appendix 4: Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation for Academic Year 2024- 2025**

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

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?	Yes
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	Yes
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	Yes
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	Yes
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	Yes
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	Yes

Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	Yes
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	No
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	No
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	No
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	Yes
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	No
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	No

Appendix 5: Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: School Community of **Scoil Mhuire Lacken**

The Board of Management of **Scoil Mhuire Lacken** wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of 12/12/205.

- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.*

Signed John Donohoe Date 12/12/2025

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed A.Riley Date 12/12/2025

Principal