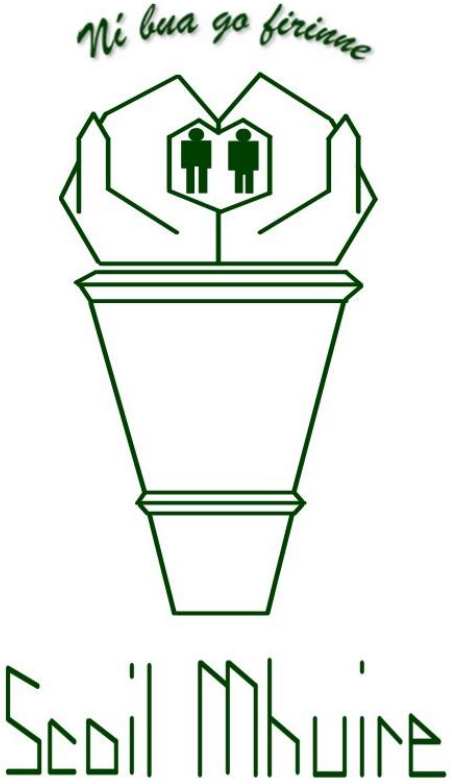
Scoil Mhuire Community School



Anti-Bullying Policy

September 2022

Contents

1. Introduction – Scoil Mhuire Community School 3

2. Definition of Bullying 4

3. Aims and Objectives 4

4. Types of Bullying Behaviour 5

5. Response to Bullying 7

6. Procedures for Reporting an incident of Bullying 15

7. Procedures for investigating, following up and recording of bullying behaviour and intervention strategies used by our School for addressing cases of bullying behaviour 15

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Anti-Bullying Procedures in Scoil Mhuire Community School .. 18

9. Prevention of Harassment 19

10. Policy Adoption and Review 19

11. Policy Dissemination and Publication 19

12. Policy Review 19

Appendix 1 - Bullying Behaviour Report Form 20

Appendix 2: Bullying Behaviour Record Form 21

Appendix 3: Checklist for Annual Review of the Anti-bullying Policy and its Implementation 23

Appendix 4: Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the Anti-Bullying Policy 24

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Introduction – Scoil Mhuire Community School

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Developing Code of Behaviour Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB), the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Community School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013 which were published in September 2013. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Acceptable Use Policy, Mobile Phone Policy, and Code of Behaviour.

This policy includes bullying that is either perpetrated by students or experienced by students in our School.

Scoil Mhuire Community School prides itself in the spiritual and pastoral culture that is the characteristic spirit of our school. Each student's welfare is at the heart of our school's endeavours. The caring and Christian characteristic spirit of our school is promoted by all partners within the community. The aim of Scoil Mhuire Community School is to ensure that the school nurtures a positive inclusive school environment, where students, teachers, parents, and ancillary staff know that they are valued across our school. All are expected and encouraged to be welcoming and respectful of diversity and difference. This anti-bullying policy is situated within this culture and enables the spirit of this policy to be expressed in a positive and caring manner.

The Board of Management (BOM) recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students or staff and is therefore fully committed to 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; 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 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); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

The Board of Management (BOM) of Scoil Mhuire Community School has adopted the DES Procedures Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013 as the basis for the way in which the Scoil Mhuire Community School community addresses the issue of bullying.

2. Definition of Bullying (In line with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013)

Bullying is defined as “unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conduct by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time”.

Bullying is a systematic and on-going form of behaviour. This repeated behaviour can be verbal, psychological, or physical. Bullying behaviour is a sustained and deliberate attempt by one person or a group of people to intimidate another person(s). Bullying requires an imbalance of power, and the action is repeated over a time.

A once off incident of dispute between two people of the same standing **does not constitute** bullying. Incidents of this nature or any negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with our 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.**

3. Aims and Objectives

The characteristic spirit of our school encourages mutual respect, trust, care, consideration, and support for others. Our goal is to create and maintain a safe and secure environment in which everyone can learn and work. The aim of this policy is to prevent and address any behaviour deemed as bullying. The implementation of this policy will nurture and uphold a characteristic spirit where bullying will not be tolerated. All members of our school community have a responsibility to recognise bullying when it occurs and take appropriate action in accordance with this school policy.

3.1 Policy Aims

This policy aims to;

- Raise awareness of bullying as a form of **unacceptable behaviour** with school leadership, teachers, students, parents/guardians, other members of our school community.
- Address the issue of bullying in a firm and positive manner through a range of measures and strategies which will enable all members of the school community to effectively address bullying behaviour.
- Create an atmosphere of openness and mindset which encourages persons exposed to bullying behaviour to disclose incidents of bullying behaviour and talk about their experience
- Ensure that there is no uncertainty regarding the rights of each student to a safe and secure learning environment.
- Ensure that each member of the school community recognises his/her responsibility to achieve these aims.
- To work with and through the various external agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour.
- To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this school policy on anti-bullying behaviour.

3.2 Policy Objectives

- That students, staff, parents, and visitors will treat one another fairly and their belongings with respect.
- That bullying behaviour will not be tolerated in Scoil Mhuire Community School.
- That people feel safe and are able to report bullying without concern for consequences.
- That people stand up for, support and respect each other.
- To develop procedures for noting, reporting, investigating, and responding to incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To communicate symptoms of bullying and prevention strategies.
- Ensure that the educational programmes and initiatives pursued by Scoil Mhuire Community School are accessible to the whole school community and emphasised as appropriate for specific target groups.
- Ensure supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- Clearly outline and communicate the responsibility of each member of our school community in striving to achieve the aims of this policy.
- Collaborate with the relevant external agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour.
- Utilise School Self Evaluation (SSE) guidelines and/or alternative channels to continually monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this school policy on anti-bullying behaviour.

4. Types of Bullying Behaviour (Not Exhaustive)

Types of bullying behaviour include;

- Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip, and other forms of relational bullying
- Verbal
- Physical
- Cyber-bullying - (See Page 13 for advice on internet safety for students and parents)
- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, religious beliefs, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or additional educational needs. Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013.

Types	Examples	Types	Examples
Verbal	· Name-calling · Slagging · Taunting · Verbal abuse · Gossip · Offensive joke · Intimidation · Threats · An attack by rumour, gossip, innuendo, or ridicule on any individual's reputation · Sexual Harassment	**Social**	· Isolation – being "left out" · Isolation – being ignored · Exclusion · Having rumours spread about you. · An attack by rumour, gossip, innuendo, or ridicule on any individual's reputation. · Domineering behaviour · Taking someone's friends away · Talking loudly enough so the intended victim can hear
Physical	· Physical Aggression · Damage to property · Harassment · Kicking · Punching · Victimisation · Intimidation – threatening behaviour · The "look" · Graffiti · Intrusion - interfering with personal belongings / personal space · Stealing · Sexual Abuse	**Psychological / Emotional**	· Deliberate Exclusion · Extortion · Graffiti · Intrusion - interfering with personal belongings / personal space · Victimisation · Intimidation · Dirty looks · Stalking · Manipulation · Unpredictable reactions · Sexual Harassment · Taking someone's friends away · Talking loudly enough so the intended victim can hear
Cyber	· Silent phone calls · Abusive phone calls · Abusive text messages · Abusive e-mail · Abusive website comments /blogs /MSN /pictures /Facebook/Twitter · Online polls/fake pages/camera phone abuse · Sharing pictures online	**Identity – Based Bullying**	· Homophobic · Transphobic · Ethnicity – shared characteristics such as race, culture, language, religion, and traditions e.g., Irish Traveller Community · Physical Disabilities · Additional Educational Needs (AEN) · Socio-Economic background ❖ Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about a person's colour, nationality, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic background etc. ❖ Taunting, name calling, spreading rumours, Sexual Harassment

4.1 Indications of Bullying Behaviour – Signs and Symptoms

The following signs and systems may suggest that a student is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school – requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from the school.
- Fear of going out to the covered courtyard, external area etc.
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, particularly among older students.
- 'Mitching'.
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.
- Unable to speak and/or participate in class.
- Pattern of physical illnesses (e.g., headaches, stomach aches).
- Changes in sleeping and eating patterns.
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour. These may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after longer school holidays.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress – stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting.
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either students or staff.
- Becoming disruptive or aggressive.
- Possessions missing or damaged.
- Increased requests for money or stealing money to meet extortion demands.
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing.
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling them.
- Becoming isolated in the class.
- Unexplained absences.
- May begin to target other younger students/siblings.

These signs do not necessarily mean that a student is being bullied. They can also be indicative of other difficulties. If repeated or occurring in combination, these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish whether or not bullying is the root cause.

4.2 Where does bullying take place?

Bullying can take place anywhere, however the following places have been identified as areas in need of monitoring in relation to bullying in our school.

The Schoolyard: The schoolyard & courtyard, with hidden or obscure areas, or because of its size, may provide an environment conducive to bullying. Certain games students may play provide opportunities to single out, leave out or harass another student. The noise level masks much of what is going on. While our junior and senior students are segregated, the schoolyard may provide an opportunity for older students to pick on younger ones.

The Classroom: Bullying can also take place in the classroom. It can occur subtly through glances, looks, and sniggers. However, it may take the overt form of physical intimidation. It may also be exacerbated if a classroom atmosphere prevails whereby pupils are allowed to make derogatory remarks about their classmates or other teachers.

The Toilets/Changing Areas: This is another area where bullying may take place.

Sporting Activities: Bullying may take place during and/or around these activities.

The Corridors: It is possible to be bullied while on the corridors as classes move from one classroom to another or to areas like the PE Hall, Library, Computer Rooms or if students are sent on an errand.

School Outings: Bullying can also take place on trips outside of school, while walking or on tour buses, attending sports events, cultural trips, etc.

Outside School: Factors having their origin in differences or conflicts between parties outside the school may contribute to increased incidents of bullying inside the school. Students can be bullied on their journey to and from school. They can also be bullied while waiting to be admitted to class in the mornings and having been dismissed in the evenings. The local shops, sports clubs, homes, and local neighbourhood can also be scenes of bullying.

Online: Cyber bullying involves using the Internet, social media platforms & mobile phones etc. to send hurtful messages or posting information to damage people's reputation and friendships. Cyber bullying is similar to other types of bullying, except that it takes place online and through messages sent to mobile phones and shared on social media platforms.

Supervision
A whole school approach to being vigilant at all times in these areas involves all members of the school community, teaching and non-teaching staff, and parents/guardians.

4.3 Bullying of Students with Additional Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

Scoil Mhuire Community School is an inclusive school. We provide a secure, accepting, safe and stimulating environment where everyone is valued.

We have students who have additional educational needs and/or a disability. Everyone involved in our school is very aware that these students can be especially vulnerable to bullying and we must therefore be particularly vigilant at all times.

High academic achievers can also be affected by bullying. Members of our school community must treat this type of bullying seriously in the same way as any other type of bullying behaviour.

5. Response to Bullying

5.1 The School's Response

The role of our school in response to bullying behaviour is to provide the highest standard of education and guidance in a caring, stable, secure learning environment. Bullying behaviour, by its very nature, undermines and dilutes the quality of education. It affects not only those immediately involved but also the rest of the community. Bullying behaviour thrives in an atmosphere of uncertainty and secrecy. The goal of our school is to prevent bullying behaviour from taking a foothold in our classrooms or in the courtyard through appropriate classroom management, collective vigilance throughout the community of the school and the employment of educational and preventative strategies to combat bullying behaviour – section 6.5 of the DES Procedures. All incidents of bullying behaviour will be addressed in a fair and equitable manner.

- Scoil Mhuire Community School will adopt a **whole-school approach** (involving the school leadership team, staff, parents/guardians, students, and members of the wider school community) to prevent and combat bullying. Scoil Mhuire Community School is committed to engaging with parents/guardians. All stakeholders will be involved in the ongoing development of policies and practices across our school to combat bullying.

- Scoil Mhuire Community School makes it clear to all members of the school community that bullying of any kind is unacceptable, irrespective of whether it is a student, a staff member or any other person that is the subject of such behaviour. In this context, all members of the school community have a duty to bring to the attention of a relevant teacher, the Principal or Deputy Principal any incident of bullying, cyberbullying, or harassment that they know about or suspect.

- The primary focus of the school, when investigating and dealing with bullying, is on **resolving differences** and **restoring, as far as is practicable**, the relationships between the parties involved. However, the school may take such disciplinary action as is necessary up to and including suspension and expulsion in accordance with its anti- bullying procedures and the School's Code of Behaviour.

- Students will be provided with opportunities to understand the causes and effects of bullying. It is recognised that there is potential within the teaching of all subjects and within extracurricular activities to foster an attitude of respect for all, to promote the value of diversity, to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
    - The School's Social, Personal and Health education (SPHE) curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety, and relationships. The school's Relationship and Sexuality Educational (RSE) programme provides opportunities to explore and discuss areas such as human sexuality and relationships which have particular relevance to identity-based bullying, in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying. The school will make every reasonable effort to ensure that the full potential of these programmes is exploited in its efforts to combat bullying.

- Prevention and awareness-raising measures will deal explicitly with cyber-bullying through educating students about appropriate online behaviour and how to stay safe while on-line and through developing a culture of reporting any concerns about or incidents of bullying to a member of the teaching staff.

- Scoil Mhuire Community School will make every effort to highlight the importance of students reporting incidents or concerns about bullying to a member of the teaching staff on the clear understanding that these matters are being reported in confidence. This means that, as far as possible, a student who draws concerns about bullying to the attention of a member of staff will not have his/her identity divulged.
- Scoil Mhuire Community School will seek the assistance of and collaborate with the National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS), the HSE and the Gardaí, as appropriate, to combat bullying.
- Scoil Mhuire Community School takes particular account of the needs of students with disabilities and/or with Additional Educational Needs. This will involve continued focus on inclusion and on developing social skills. The school pays particular attention to student induction and cultivating a school culture that respects everyone and values helping one another.
- Time will be scheduled during selected staff planning meetings for the review and discussion of our school's anti-bullying policy. This will empower all staff, teachers, and non-teaching staff to implement the policy consistently and effectively.

5.2 On-going Anti-Bullying Initiatives/Strategies in Scoil Mhuire Community School

- **Anti-Bullying Co-Ordination** is a significant element of our Student Development Leader's responsibilities. This person will lead our anti-bullying educational and preventative initiatives/strategies across our school. This will include the promotion, supervision, and monitoring of the practices that are in place to avoid and address bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

  Our Anti-Bullying Co-Ordinator will facilitate the administration of anti-bullying surveys & correlate the findings. Data gathered through these surveys, the reporting templates (Appendix 1) and the recording templates (Appendix 2) will be collated and analysed throughout the year to monitor the levels of bullying behaviour and identifying issues requiring attention. The Anti-Bullying Co-Ordinator will collaborate with the relevant school personnel to address any concerns identified on an ongoing basis.

- We now employ the **"Helping Hands" Anti-Bullying Programme"** with our 1st and 2nd Year students. This will grow and extend to all year groups as these cohort's progress through our school. Helping Hands ABP is a high-quality programme for teachers and student support teams. It includes a convenient diagnostic tool that accesses peer group relationship dynamics normally hidden from teachers. We use the Helping Hands Programme to place students in teams in all their classes. It ensures that students are in teams where they feel accepted and included.

  The 'Helping Hands' programme is a valuable tool for **supporting inclusive education**. It allows teachers to better support wellbeing, by identifying vulnerable students. The Helping Hands Core Team among others are provided with a clear indication of students who may require further educational and/or social interventions put in place.

- Our **Anti-Bullying Week** is organised annually, where possible to coincide with the National Anti-Bullying Week (November 14th – 18th 2022). There are numerous events and activities across our school to encourage inclusion, respect for diversity & difference, and respect for each other, e.g. multi-cultural events, disability awareness etc. The week also includes lessons, team building and self-esteem enhancing activities.

  Students and parent(s)/guardian(s) are enlightened about the "**Cool Schools**" Anti- Bullying Programme. All First-Year students participate in the "Cool Schools Programme" and take all five lessons during Anti-Bullying Week.

  Our **"Stand Up"** Awareness Week supports among others LGBTQ+ young people through events that are promoted across our school, especially during this week. Stand Up Awareness Week is a time for post-primary schools, to take a stand against homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic bullying. This week is an opportunity to take steps to make spaces safe and supportive for LGBTQ+ young people.

- We are guided and use some of the tools of the **"Anti-Bullying Campaign"** to raise awareness of bullying behaviour and to resolve bullying situations. They have progressive resources designed for each year group. In particular, the elements such as **"Recognise, Reject, Report it"**, "**If you don't report it, you support it**" and the need for an Anti-Bullying Co-Ordinator.

- **Student Leadership – Anti-Bullying Initiatives**

  Scoil Mhuire's **Anti-Bully Ambassador** Programme engages young people, parents, and teachers to change the attitudes, behaviour, and culture of bullying by building skills and confidence to address different situations, both online and offline. Students complete a training process and build skills to identify bullying, and to recognise how to support others who are being bullied.

  Scoil Mhuire's **Student Prefects, Mentors and Class Captains** structure offers the opportunity for students to become a leader within the school community. These promote inclusion, respect, and kindness to all students. **Class Captains** play an important role in the anti-bullying movement promoted throughout the school.

  Student Prefects and Mentors - Peer Mentoring Programme, this initiative aims to ease and make the transition from primary to post primary school a more enjoyable and less threatening experience for our in-coming first year students. These student leaders, especially the mentors develop supportive trusting relationships with the younger students and perform an important anti-bullying role, especially as a trusted confidant for these students.

  We are currently examining the "**Meitheal Programme"** for our mentors or as a standalone group possibly incorporating the Anti-Bully Ambassador Programme as part of our school's anti-bullying programme. Senior cycle students will receive training to equip them with the skills to become trusted leaders for incoming First Year students.

- **Other educational and preventative strategies across Scoil Mhuire Community School**

  Tutors and teachers are supported in monitoring their classes and identifying bullying behaviours.

  All class teachers address the issue of bullying in the SPHE/RSE Curriculum and 1st Year Wellbeing modules. Issues in the area of bullying are also addressed in Civic, Social and Political education (CSPE), Life Skills and in the Religious Education curriculum.

  The student mentors and staff monitor the corridors and canteen area during break and lunchtime and report any suspected bullying behaviour to our Year Heads.

  Anti-Bullying posters are displayed throughout our school.

  Students are given confidential surveys on bullying behaviour each term using MS Forms.

  Regular re-enforcement of our School's Anti-Bullying expectations and procedures is conveyed by Year Heads, our Anti-Bullying Co-Ordinator, and others at assembly. Various external experts in these are regularly invited to present and facilitate workshops with our students.

  Cyber-bullying is addressed in detail during our "**Internet Safety Week**" and throughout the year during assemblies, tutor time, lessons especially Digital Media Literacy & Information Technology lessons.

  We have a weekly **"Check-In"** by teachers for many students with additional educational needs and when resources permit other students identified by our Care Team.

  A condensed summary of the main elements of our school anti-bullying policy will be available on our school website, student journal and the teacher handbook.

- We are affiliated to the **DCU Anti-Bullying Centre**.

  We are embarking on the journey with the **FUSE Programme**. FUSE is an anti-bullying and online safety programme developed by the Anti-Bullying Research and Resource Centre in DCU. FUSE is built in Irish and international best practice research, consisting of a series of workshops and projects aimed at 2nd Year Students in Junior Cycle, their parents and school staff in post-primary schools across Ireland.

  Always at the centre of this programme are young people. FUSE aims to support and empower young people to find solutions and initiatives themselves, to tackle bullying and online safety.

  FUSE is also a research and evaluation programme, enabling schools to identify areas of improvement and self-evaluation. The curriculum focuses on empowering students to develop initiatives in their schools which tackle bullying and raise awareness of online safety.

These projects and initiatives will be showcased during Safer Internet Day. Groups of Junior cycle students will also get the opportunity to present their projects to the National Anti-Bullying Centre each year. Successful projects will receive a commendation from the Centre acknowledging their efforts to tackle bullying and online safety in their school communities.

Over the course of one academic year, FUSE aims to:

- Reduce levels of bullying in schools
- Increase reporting of bullying incidents
- Raise student, school staff and parent awareness of online safety
- Increase inclusiveness within the school climate, enabling school staff, students, and parents, to tackle bullying and online safety together.

As we begin our FUSE journey, nominated teachers will participate in a Training Programme, which will enable them to deliver workshops to school staff, parents, and students.

5.3 Response of Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff

The school staff at Scoil Mhuire Community School includes the classroom teachers, principal, deputy principals, chaplain, guidance counsellors, administration staff, special needs assistants, support/auxiliary staff, and caretakers. The school staff will foster an atmosphere of friendship, respect, and tolerance within the community of the school. The school staff will strive to ensure that Scoil Mhuire Community School remains a safe environment where the students' right to a positive school experience are realised.

All members of the school community have the right to a safe and peaceful school. Everyone has the responsibility to contribute to creating a positive and inspiring environment for learning and personal development (European Charter for Democratic Schools without violence, 2004)

Student's self-esteem will be nurtured through celebrating individual differences and personal achievements. The school's expectations of appropriate behaviour will be made explicit to students and parents. Appropriate behaviour and good manners will be modelled, acknowledged, and always rewarded. A **'whole school'** approach will be adopted by Scoil Mhuire Community School to ensure that all staff members develop a shared awareness and understanding of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour so that a consistent approach to bullying will be taken. This will include vigilant monitoring of the courtyard, the classrooms, the corridors, toilet areas, sporting activities and school outings. It is acknowledged that all members of the school community share a responsibility for preventing and combating bullying behaviour.

Our teachers maintain high standards in terms of positive classroom management in the provision of the curriculum. Our teachers are positive, enthusiastic and have high expectations of both learning and appropriate behaviour. They foster in all their students a sense of self-esteem and develop relationships with students based on mutual respect and trust. Through the formal curriculum and informally, teachers nurture a sense of empathy in their students by discussing feelings and encouraging them to understand the situation from another person's point of view.

Everyone has a right to equal treatment and respect regardless of any personal difference. Everyone enjoys freedom of speech without risking discrimination or repression (European Charter for Democratic Schools without violence, 2004)

Scoil Mhuire Community School emphasises the importance of student wellbeing and encourages good relationships through the formal curriculum which includes the teaching of SPHE and Religious Education. Anti-bullying will also be addressed in SPHE, RSE, Religion, Tutor time, Assemblies and by our Anti-Bullying Co-Ordinator and external agencies.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that the norms of the classroom (decided upon with input from the class) are implemented and that the students always behave appropriately within the school community. Teachers will be as vigilant as possible at all times. They will respond sensitively and caringly to students who disclose incidents of bullying behaviour. The reported incidents will be noted and addressed promptly and followed through irrespective of who is involved. **Year Heads/Relevant Teachers will deal with parental concerns in a timely, respectful, and professional manner, involving the Student Support Team/principal/deputy principals as appropriate. Teachers expect that parents/guardians will behave in a respectful manner towards them and that all issues will be dealt with in a calm and reasonable atmosphere.**

All non-teaching staff such as clerical and administrative staff, personal study supervisors, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners, sports' coaches, others organising extracurricular activities and those driving school buses will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to either a teacher or the Principal/Deputy Principals.

5.4 Board of Management

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring that all members of the school community are empowered to effectively address bullying type behaviour. The Board is committed to providing time and resources for the implementation of this policy. The Board will ensure that proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to strive to prevent bullying and to address incidents appropriately as they arise and facilitate early intervention where possible.

The BOM will undertake an annual review of our School's anti- bullying policy and its implementation in accordance with the procedures set out in Section 7.2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013) using the checklist included at Appendix 4 of those procedures.

A copy of the checklist is included in Appendix 3 of this document.
The BOM will ensure that an action plan is put in place through the principal & our anti-bullying co-ordinator to address any areas for improvement identified by the annual review

5.5 Student's Response

Scoil Mhuire Community School provides a positive inclusive characteristic spirit where learning and personal development are facilitated. We expect high standards of behaviour from every member of our school community.

- Students are expected to show respect for themselves and for all members of our school community. They are taught to be tolerant of the differences and needs of others. Students know that bullying is an unacceptable form of aggressive behaviour both inside and outside school. Like other forms of aggression, bullying unfolds in a set of social contexts: between two students, within peer groups, or in the general school environment. It is recognised that **most** students are **bystanders** of bullying situations, aware of what is going on and sometimes participating. As well as those who are bullied and those who bully, there are usually others who are witnesses.

The following participant roles have been identified:

- **Assistants** who join in and assist the Bully.
- **Reinforcers** who do not actively attack the victim but provide an audience thus giving positive feedback to the perpetrator.
- **Outsiders** who do not take sides but allow the bullying to continue with their 'silent approval'.
- **Defenders** who comfort the victim and try to stop the bullying.

Many peers become **Bystanders** because

- They are afraid of getting hurt themselves.
- They are afraid of becoming the new target.
- They feel that by intervening they will only make the situation worse.
- They do not know what to do and do not have the knowledge or the skills to intervene effectively.

Our anti-bullying policy will seek to empower all students to;

Recognise, Reject and **Report** any incident that disrespects another member of our community.

More than anything else, the combating of bullying will depend on the extent to which **students** report bullying. In this context, the wellbeing of students is very much dependent on the vigilance of their fellow students and their preparedness to report. Students should have the clear understanding that these matters are being reported in confidence. This means that, as far as possible, a student who draws concerns about bullying to the attention of a member of staff **will not** have his/her identity divulged.

5.6 Parents' Response

Parents/Guardians play a vital role in supporting their student(s) and the school community in countering and preventing bullying behaviour.

It is **important** that parents/guardians realise that anyone can become involved in bullying type behaviour, and anyone can be a target of bullying. It is not just other people's sons and daughters who can bully. Here, also, it is **important** to realise that disagreements between young people are part and parcel of negotiating the road to adulthood and that every youthful disagreement **should not** be treated as a full-blown bullying episode.

In attempting to discourage bullying behaviour parents/guardians should:

- Support the school in its efforts to prevent and treat bullying.
- Speak to your student about bullying and ensure they do not engage in bullying behaviour.
- Encourage positive behaviour and discourage negative behaviour both at home and at school.
- Encourage and demonstrate to your student how to be assertive in order to solve difficulties without resorting to aggression. Advise your student not to fight back - It can make matters worse.
- Take your student's concerns seriously. Listen for signs that your student may be the target or perpetrator of bullying behaviour.
- Always take an active role in your student's education. Enquire how their day has gone, whom they have spent time with, etc.
- Discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with your student.

Parents/Guardians should advise their student to:

1. Walk away from unsafe situations.
2. Seek immediate help from a responsible adult and report bullying to school personnel.
3. Ignore the perpetrator - attention is what bullies are seeking.

- Parents/Guardians may be the first to be told about bullying behaviour. The **onus** is on the **Parent/Guardian** to inform the school, thus setting in motion the procedure of investigation. Prior to making a report to the school, parents are best advised to take a calm problem-solving approach and to gather as much information as possible**.** Parents should approach the Year-Head, the Deputy Principal, the Principal, or any member of staff to report incidents of this nature. All parents' concerns will be taken seriously, and prompt action will be taken.

- It is important for parents to understand that teachers may be unaware of bullying behaviour in the classroom or on the corridors because this type of behaviour is generally covert in nature and concealed from adults. Teachers need the **support** of parents/guardians and students to bring all bullying behaviour to their attention so that this behaviour can be rehabilitated to enable and maintain a high standard of appropriate behaviour.

- Parents should keep a record of repeated incidents to assess the seriousness of the situation. Many students overcome the problem with the proper help and support. However, this policy recognises that many incidents are not resolved immediately. Moreover, it is important that all parties recognise that, once the investigative process is initiated, it will take time to fully review and resolve an alleged incident of bullying behaviour.

- In accordance with 6.8.9 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013 parents/guardians and students are expected 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'.

- Where the school advises the Parent/Guardian of the alleged victim, or the student themselves if over the age of 18, to allow the formal process to take place and where that same Parent/Guardian or student over the age of 18 wishes to cease engagement with the formal process, the Parent/Guardian or student over the age of 18 will make this clear in writing to the school, at the time.

- Where the Parent/Guardian of the alleged victim, or the student themselves if over the age of 18, makes it clear in writing to the school at the time that the Parent/Guardian wishes the formal process to cease, the school wishes to make clear that the school's pastoral approach or duty of care to the student's welfare, will not cease.

5.7 Cyber bullying

Most Students have daily access to mobile phones, and computers, and will use social networking sites to stay in contact with friends. While we must provide the highest protection possible for students using new technologies, **families must also foster a balance between protecting children and teaching them to be aware of potential dangers** and assessing threats for themselves. Encouraging students to talk about issues they come across online is a step towards building trust in young people's ability to use the internet and mobile phones responsibly and to safeguard themselves and their peers against those who use the internet to threaten their welfare.

Cyber bullying is similar to other types of bullying, except that it takes place online and through messages sent to mobile phones and/or shared on social media platforms, posting information to damage people's reputation and friendships. These comments can make a student feel apprehensive, and this is psychological abuse. Cyber bullies can be classmates, online acquaintances, and even anonymous users, but most often they do know their victims.

Cyberbullying can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing bullies with another route to annoy their target. However, it differs in several significant ways from other kinds of bullying — the invasion of home and personal space; the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages; the size of the audience; the false idea that the Internet is an anonymous space; and even the profile of the person doing the bullying and their target.

Cyberbullying, like all bullying, must be taken very seriously. There are steps that you can take to protect yourself and your friends from getting caught up in cyberbullying.

Preventing cyber bullying in our school

The **Acceptable Use Policy** (AUP) extracts;

- "Scoil Mhuire Community School has chosen to implement the following level on content filtering on the Schools Broadband Network: - Level 4. This level allows access to millions of websites including games and YouTube but blocks access to websites belonging to the personal website's category and websites such as Facebook, Snapchat, and Twitter belonging to the Social Networking category. Pupils taking steps to by-pass the content filter by using proxy sites or other means may be subject to disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, detention and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion."
- "Pupils and staff must be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored for unusual activity, security and/or network management reasons."
- "Pupils must not send any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person. Pupils should immediately report the receipt of any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable, is offensive, discriminatory, threatening or bullying in nature and must not respond to any such communication."
- "Staff and pupils must not use social media and the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, staff, or other members of the Scoil Mhuire Community School community."
- "Sharing explicit images and in particular explicit images of pupils and/or minors is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved."
- Engaging in online activities with the intention to harm, harass, or embarrass and another pupil or member of staff is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved

Our **Mobile Phone Policy** extracts;

Acceptable Use

- "When brought to school mobile phones must be switched off stowed away safely. 'Switched off' does not mean 'Silent', 'Meeting' or any similar mode. The phone must be powered off, unless being used for educational purposes under the direct instruction of a teacher."
- "Other than when under the direct instruction of a teacher/supervisor in their class or when signing in/out inside the School Office - students are not permitted to access or use mobile phones/devices during the entire school day, inclusive of after school events/study and training. Failure to comply with this policy will result in the confiscation of the device."
- "In certain classes as pre-arranged by the class teacher when school devices are unavailable, specific teaching and learning or research activities may require access to a personal mobile device. Such access and usage will take place under the clear, focused guidance and supervision of the teacher with defined learning intentions and once that activity is completed students must turn their mobile devices off and stow them away safely."
- "Such access is limited to that specific activity and is governed by the Scoil Mhuire Community School **Acceptable Usage Policy**."

The ways that young people can bully online are:

- Sending someone mean or threatening emails, instant messages, or text messages.
- Sending photos without permission being sought or granted.
- Excluding someone from an instant messenger friends/buddy list or blocking their email for no reason.
- Tricking someone into revealing personal or embarrassing information and sending it to others.
- Using someone's password or breaking into someone's email or social media platforms to send cruel or untrue messages while posing as that person.
- Creating websites to make fun of another person such as a classmate or teacher.
- Uploading photos to social networking sites without permission being sought or granted
- Using websites to rate peers.
- Leaving hurtful comments on social networking platforms such Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter etc.

Scoil Mhuire Community School teaches students that all types of bullying including cyber bullying is hurtful and wrong. Students are encouraged to treat other students on and offline with respect. The whole school community is informed and educated with regard to the school's **Acceptable Use Policy & Mobile Phone Policy**. All members of the school community are fully aware of the sanctions that will be imposed for the misuse of school computers and other devices to cause hurt and distress to others. Students are made aware of their rights and responsibilities "online" and "offline" as part of the implementation of the school's AUP. Students are taught that the Internet is not a private place, and they should guard their private information online. The AUP policy promotes the positive use of technology, discusses etiquette and personal safety issues. Our school encourages an open 'disclosing' atmosphere, including the reporting of cyber bullying. The ethos of our school community is to encourage students to make friends and promote positive well-being and a supportive atmosphere across our school.

The Parents' response to cyber bullying

- Offer support and reassurance to your student.
- Help your student to keep relevant evidence for investigation by printing webpages, by not deleting mobile messages and by photographing messages rather than screenshotting.
- Show your student how to prevent it happening again by changing password and contact details, blocking contacts, reporting abuse on site.
- Ensure that your student knows not to retaliate or return the message.
- Encourage your student to keep personal information private online.
- Insist that your student never, ever gives their personal password to another person, even a friend.
- Insist that your student never accepts as "an online friend" a stranger whom they do not know in real life.
- **Parents must take full responsibility for their student's inappropriate use of the Internet or mobile phones outside school.**

Students' response to cyber bullying

1. **Always respect others:** Remember that when you send a message to someone, you cannot see the impact that your words or images may have on the other person. That is why it is important to always show respect to people and be careful what you say online or what images you send.
2. **Don't retaliate or reply:** Replying to bullying messages, particular in anger, is just what the bully wants.
3. **Think before you send:** If you receive a rude or nasty message or picture about someone else, do not forward it. You could be assisting a bully and even be accused of cyberbullying yourself. It is important to think before you send any images or text about yourself or someone else by email or mobile phone, or before you post information on a website. Remember that what you send can be made public very quickly and could stay online forever. Do you really want your teacher or future employer to see that photo?
4. **Save the evidence:** Learn how to keep records of offending messages, pictures, or online conversations. These will help you show to others what is happening and can be used by the school, internet service provider, mobile phone company, or even the police to investigate the cyberbullying.
5. **Block the Bully:** Most responsible websites and services allow you to block or report someone who is behaving badly.
6. **Make sure you report:** You have a right not to be harassed and bullied online. There are people that can help. Inform your school. Your teachers or tutor can support you. Tell a parent or adult you can trust. Tell the provider of the service you have been bullied on (e.g., your mobile-phone operator or social-network provider).
7. Treat your **password** like your big secret. Don't let anyone know your passwords. It is a good idea to change them on a regular basis. Choosing a hard-to-guess password with symbols or numbers will help stop people hacking into your account and pretending to be you. Remember to only give your mobile number or personal website address **to trusted friends**.
8. **Finally, don't just stand there.** If you see cyberbullying going on, support the victim and report the bullying. How would you feel if no one stood up for you?

Investigating incidents of Cyber Bullying

Parents must take full responsibility for their student's inappropriate use of the Internet or mobile phones outside school. All incidents of cyber bullying that have their origins in school will be fully investigated, recorded, and addressed employing the procedures laid down in the Code of Behaviour, the Anti-Bullying Policy, and Acceptable Use Policy. Sanctions laid down in these policies will be adhered to in response to inappropriate use of media and information technology

Incidents of cyber bullying that take place outside the school and affect a student in school will be brought to the attention of parents/guardians and/or parents/guardians bring them to the attention of the school. Regarding serious incidents of this type of bullying behaviour it is appropriate to inform the Gardaí.

6. Procedures for Reporting an incident of Bullying

Relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying

Students, parents/guardians, non-teaching staff or members of the wider community should feel welcome to report their concerns to any member of the teaching staff — including the Deputy Principal and/or the Principal. In this regard, any member of the teaching staff is deemed to be a relevant teacher in the context of Section 6.8.3 of the DES Procedures.

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying in Scoil Mhuire Community School are the Year Heads of the group or groups involved. In some cases, the Guidance Counsellors, Anti-Bullying Co-Ordinator, Chaplain, and Deputy Principals may investigate incidents of bullying behaviour. The teacher to whom the incident is initially reported should record the information on the Bullying Behaviour Report Form (Appendix 1) and then pass this to the Year Head as soon as possible. The teacher or Year Head may request the support of the Guidance Counsellor or Anti-Bullying Co-Ordinator where they feel it is appropriate.

In line with our motto, **"If you don't report it, you support it",** all students are encouraged to report all bullying incidents to a member of staff.

- All reported incidents will be recorded, investigated promptly, and treated fairly and equitably, giving due regard to individual circumstances.
- Serious cases of bullying will be referred onto the Principal.
- All involved are best advised to take a calm unemotional, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by staff, students, or parents/guardians.

7. Procedures for investigating, following up and recording of bullying behaviour and intervention strategies used by our School for addressing cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

At Scoil Mhuire Community School, we are committed to dealing with any reported incident of bullying behaviour in a fair, consistent, and pastoral manner. In developing our procedure to address reports of bullying behaviour it has been custom and practice in our school that our Year Heads would be best suited to overseeing, investigating, and intervening in such behaviour occurring within their year groups. Each Year Head builds strong relationships with his/her year group and is aware of their needs and personalities. The Year Head's priority is to **resolve the situation rather than assign blame**.

Where a member of the teaching staff has a concern about a student being bullied, s/he should record the issue and report it to the Year Head who will investigate and deal with the matter. Alternatively, the teacher may refer the matter to the Deputy Principal or Principal.

7.1 Investigating an incident of bullying

Our School will investigate all allegations of bullying and will take disciplinary action where necessary even when the bullying acts are committed outside of the school if they impinge on the work or wellbeing of a student in the school.

Scoil Mhuire Community School in accordance with Section 6.3.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013 measures will seek the assistance of agencies such as NEPS, the HSE, and the Gardaí, where it deems such assistance is necessary to deal effectively with bullying behaviour. Where the school deems bullying behaviour to be potentially abusive (see sections 6.8.12, 6.8.13 and 6.8.14 of the Dept. of Education procedures) it will consult with the HSE's Children and Family Services (Tusla) to assist it in drawing up an appropriate response or to obtain advice or to make a formal child protection report to the HSE or the Gardaí (as appropriate) in accordance with the Department of Education Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017.

Concerns or allegations of bullying will be investigated and addressed in accordance with Section 6.8 9 of the Department of Education Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013.

These are summarised as follows;

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the focus will be on resolving the interpersonal issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved - rather than apportioning blame.

- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and Students are required to assist the school by cooperating with any investigation.

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant Year Head will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.

- Incidents of bullying will be investigated in a calm, unemotional problem- solving manner.

- Incidents of bullying will be investigated outside of the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard for the rights of students, irrespective of whether they are allegedly involved in bullying behaviour or in a position to provide information about the behaviour being investigated.

- Those investigating bullying behaviour, calmly, will seek answers to questions of **what, where, when, who and why.**

- Where deemed appropriate, those being interviewed may be asked to write down their account of what happened.

- In accordance with 6.8.9 of the Department of Education procedures parents and students are expected 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.

- Where the Year Head investigating a bullying issue determines 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 to explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school will give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by our School.

- Where the Year Head determines that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and every reasonable effort will be made to try to encourage him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the student/s being bullied.

- Where the school deems it necessary to impose disciplinary sanctions, it will be made clear to all involved (both the bullied and those doing the bullying and their parents) that this is a **private matter** between the student being disciplined, his/her parents and the school.

- As a follow up to a bullying issue being resolved, the relevant teacher (Year Head/Counsellor/Anti-Bullying Co-Ordinator) should meet separately with the relevant parties to review progress. Subsequently, but only if the student who has been bullied is ready and agreeable, consideration should be given to meeting with both parties simultaneously as this can have a therapeutic effect – restorative practice.

- Where the Year Head considers that the bullying behaviour **has not** been adequately and appropriately addressed **within 20 school days** the incident **must** be reported to the Student Support Team.

- Furthermore, **repeated** incidents of bullying of a particular student over a period of time should be brought to the attention of the Student Support Team/Deputy Principal/Principal. Henceforth, senior leadership will work together with the Year Head to put a strategy in place to further address the case.

- Continuous or extremely severe incidents must be referred to the Student Support Team/Deputy Principals/Principal who will address the situation in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy and Code of Discipline.

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and **appropriately addressed**, the Year Head must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:

    - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased; whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable; whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable and any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents and the school.

    - The parties involved in the bullying incidents will be advised not to discuss the same with their friends or other students in such a way as to inflame the incident and as a result to make matters worse for any party involved.

7.2 Recording Incidents

Students are encouraged to inform any adult whom they know or trust. This adult should listen carefully and record (in a factual way,) what the student has told them

- This report must be completed at the earliest possible opportunity and must be passed to the Year Head as soon as possible using the **Bullying Behaviour Report Form** (Appendix 1).
- Year Heads must use **Bullying Behaviour Record Form** (Appendix 2) to record the outcome of each bullying behaviour case.
- A copy of all reports and recording forms must be shared with the Anti-Bullying Co-Ordinator.
- All records must be kept in secure location by the Year Heads & the Anti-Bullying Co-Ordinator, a copy must be placed in the relevant student files and retained in accordance with our document retention policy. Records should be kept indefinitely.
- These records must be kept private & confidential.
- The following members of staff should also have access to these records:
    - Principal and Deputy Principals
    - Anti-Bullying Co-Ordinator
    - Guidance Counsellors
    - Chaplain
    - Student Support Team

7.3 Right of Appeal

Where the parents/guardians of a student or a student of 18 years or more are not satisfied that the School has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with its own policy and/or the Department of Education procedures, they will be advised their right to make an appeal to the School BOM. Such appeals shall be submitted, in writing to the Chairperson, BOM, as soon as possible following the appellants informing the principal that they are of the opinion that the school had not followed its own policy and/or the DES Procedures.

Following an unsuccessful or unsatisfactory outcome of the appeal to the BOM, the appellants will be advised of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

7.4 A Year Head may select from any or all of the following actions in support of all students affected by bullying:

- Open discussion with persons involved in respect of their behaviour giving due consideration to the wishes of the person being bullied. The aim of this discussion is to arrive at an agreement with is mutually acceptable to all parties – Restorative Practice. Restorative practice is a strategy that seeks to repair relationships that have been damaged, including those damaged through bullying. It **does** this by bringing about a sense of remorse and **restorative** action on the part of the offender and forgiveness by the victim.
- Possible involvement of other services within the school e.g., Guidance Counsellors, Chaplain, Student Support Team, & Anti Bullying Co-Ordinator.
- Seek support of a pastoral nature from Tutor, and other staff.
- Educate the year group and seek their support in combating the type of bullying which has occurred by addressing the issues with them in collaboration with our Anti-Bullying Co-Ordinator & external agencies.
- Inform and involve parents having determined that behaviour of a bullying nature has occurred.
- Employ mediation/restorative practices.
- Referral of students to external support agencies.
- Disciplinary action where appropriate in accordance with the school's code of discipline
- It may be both useful and necessary to explain to some students the difference between "ignoring" and "not being friends" as well as the importance of respecting all members of the school community.

7.5 Procedure Policy Relating to Teacher/Student Bullying

Teachers have a duty to care for students in our school. This is the expectation at Scoil Mhuire Community School. If a student complains that a teacher is bullying them, it is important that the Parent/Guardian listen to them. In many cases, the conflict with the teacher may be related to the normal challenges of teaching. Possible reasons for conflict might be; misbehaviour in class; misinterpretation of the teacher's actions; is the teacher trying to challenge the child to work harder; is this the only teacher the child complains of? These possibilities should be discussed with the student.

If a Parent/Guardian believes their student is being bullied, the Parent /Guardian must inform the school principal/deputy principal. An appointment will be facilitated to meet the class teacher with the principal/deputy principal and make them aware of their concerns. It may be productive, too, to speak with the teacher on a regular basis after this initial meeting until the situation is resolved.

If there is no resolution to the problem, parents should approach the school principal who will attempt to resolve the difficulty. If this fails, parents should make a formal complaint to the school Board of Management. This is the procedure Complaints made by Parents/Guardians or students against a teacher.

In the case of a complaint by a teacher against a student, the teacher talks to the student and/or the parents/guardians. The teacher may then refer the matter to the principal.

7.6 Programme of support for working with students affected by bullying

Our School will put in place a programme of support for **ALL** students who have been affected by bullying.

This programme may involve:

- Offering appropriate counselling.
- Providing opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their social skills and to build their resilience.
- Providing students with appropriate opportunities to build their self-esteem and feelings of self-worth.
- Encouraging students who have observed incidents of bullying behaviour to discuss them with their teachers and their parents and to avail of counselling where they feel it may assist them to cope effectively with what they have experienced.
- Providing counselling for those who bully to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Anti-Bullying Procedures in Scoil Mhuire Community School.

The BOM confirms that the Anti-Bullying Co-Ordinator will collaborate with the principal and other members of our school community to supervise and monitor the practices that are in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

The implementation and effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying policy will be an agenda item for staff meetings as necessitated — so the concerns about the policy and/or the welfare of individual students can be shared and effectively addressed. Bullying issues will be regularly addressed at middle leadership meetings.

Data gathered through the reporting templates (Appendix 1) and the recording templates (Appendix 2) will be collated and analysed throughout the year to monitor the levels of bullying behaviour and identifying issues requiring attention. This analysis will complement the information gathered through the bullying surveys administered by the Anti-Bullying Co-Ordinator.

At least once in every school term, the principal will present a report to the BOM setting out the following:

- The overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template (Appendix 2) since the previous report to the Board.
- Confirmation that all such cases referred via the reporting template (Appendix 1) and the recording template (Appendix 2) have been or are being addressed in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the Department of Education procedures.
- The principal's report will be included in the minutes of the Board meeting, however the students involved will not be identified.

9. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that our School will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of students or staff or the harassment of students 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. Policy Adoption and Review

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 11/10/23

11. Policy Dissemination and Publication

This policy will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website, notified using our school App and provided to the Scoil Mhuire CS Parent's Association.

12. Policy Review

- The BOM will undertake an annual review of the School's anti-bullying policy and its implementation in accordance with the procedures set out in Section 7.2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013 using the checklist included at Appendix 4 of those procedures. A copy of the checklist is included in Appendix 3 of this document.
- The BOM will ensure that an action plan is put in place to address any areas for improvement identified by the annual review.
- Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website, notified using our school App and provided to the Scoil Mhuire CS Parent's Association.
- Details of the review and any decision resulting will be recorded in the Board's minutes and will be made available to the Patron and the Department of Education.

Signed: _____ Date: 11/10/23

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____ Date: 11/10/23

Principal/Secretary of the Board of Management

Date of Ratification by the B.O.M.: 11/10/23

Appendix 1 - Bullying Behaviour Report Form

Bullying Behaviour Report Form

Date: _____ **Time:** _____

Teacher: _____ **Class:** _____

Names of those involved:

_____

_____

_____

Details of Incident (incl dates):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SIGNED:

Student: _____

Teacher: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Received by Year Head:

_____ Date:_____

Signed by Year Head

Appendix 2: Bullying Behaviour Record Form

1. **Name of student being bullied and class group**

Name _____ Class_____

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

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. **Source of bullying concern/report** (Please tick relevant box(es)).

Student (themself)	
Other student	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents (Please tick relevant box(es)).

Schoolyard/Courtyard	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

4. **Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern**

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. **Type of Bullying Behaviour** (tick relevant box(es)) *****

Physical		Cyber-bullying	
Verbal		Psychological / Emotional	
Social / Relational		Identity-Based	
Other (specify)			

6. **Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:**

Homophobic /Transphobic	Disability	AEN	Racism/Ethnicity	Membership of Traveller Community	Socio Economic	Other (specify)

7. **Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

8. **Details of actions taken:**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Signed _____ Date _____

(Relevant Teacher)

20 days Follow-Up	Yes		No		Date:
Resolved	Yes		No		
Repeated Incident of Bullying Behaviour	Yes		No		

"Unresolved" and/or "Repeated" - Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Signed _____ Date _____

(Principal/Deputy Principal)

Appendix 3: Checklist for Annual Review of the Anti-bullying Policy and its Implementation

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?*	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the Parents' Association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
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?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all students?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented, been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and therefore not included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal/Anti-Bullying Co-Ordinator (using the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends, or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed:_____ Date: 11th October 2022
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed:_____ Date: 11th October 2022
Principal/Secretary of the Board of Management

Date of Ratification by the B.O.M.: 11th October 2022

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

To: Staff, Parents/Guardians and Students

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Community School 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 the 9th October 2024.

- 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 Padraig Nolan Date 9/10/24
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed Ken Mart Date 9/10/24
Principal