Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg Anti-bullying policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the *code of behaviour guidelines* issued by the NEWB,
the Board of Management of Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg
has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.

2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

A positive school culture and climate which-

o is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
o encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
o 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-
o build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
o 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.

3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

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

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

☐ deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,

☐ cyber-bullying and

☐ identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

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

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

   A. Relevant class teacher.
   B. Relevant yard duty teacher
   C. Deputy DLP teacher(Leas Priomhoide)
   D. DLP (Principal)

   All the above will follow the procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying 6.8.9 (i) to (ix) in ANTI-BULLING PROCEDURES.

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

Sample Education and prevention strategies

School-wide approach
- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and 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.
- An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be included in student journals and displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s)s are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (every year).
- The implementation of regular (e.g. per year/per term/per month/per week) whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; annual or term or monthly student surveys; regular school or year group assemblies by principal, deputy principal, year heads etc.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
  - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - Hand note up with homework.
  - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
  - Anti-bully or Niggle box?
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - Administer a confidential questionnaire once a term to all pupils.
  - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
  - **Summary**
  - Discipline for Learning Policy
  - Positive reinforcement
  - Respect and Self- respect promoted on a daily basis
  - Uniqueness of Individual respect/difference
  - Promotion of self-confidence/self -esteem through games/music/dance/drama/quizzes/religious
  - **Bullying awareness week**
  - **On line/Cyber Bulling-Awareness**
  - **Inclusion/social skills**
  - **Respect diversity/Racism**
  - **Ongoing supervising/ monitoring**
  - **Friendship week/Niggiebx**
  - **Reference to other school policies**
  - **School policies**

- SPHE Plan/Stay Safe Programme
- Harassment
- Sexual Harassment/RSE Policy
- Record keeping
- Health and Safety
- Equality
- Special Educational Needs
- Polasaí Gaeilge
- Internet AUP

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

Procedures for investigating and dealing with Bullying :
Teachers will take a clam unemotional problem- solving approach when dealing with incidents of bulling behaviour reported by either pupils, staff or parents/ guardians. Such incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to avoid the public humiliation of the victim or the pupil engaged in the bulling In any incident of bulling, the teacher will speak separately to the pupils involved, in an attempt to get both side of the story. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of the pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information this way.

- Every case will be dealt with in the strictest confidence
- When analysing incidents of bulling behaviour, the teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why, in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually (with another adult present) and then the individuals are met as a group. Each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said.
- If it is concluded that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/ her how he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and try to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view.
- Each member of the group will be helped to handle the possible pressures that often face them from the other members after interviews by the teacher.
- Teachers who are investigating cases of bullying behaviour will keep a written record of their discussions with those involved. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident.
- In case where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, teacher/teacher and Principal/Principal meet with the parents/guardians of the two parties involved as appropriate to (a) explain the Actions being taken, referring them to school policies.
- (b) Discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions taken by the school.
- Separate follow-up meetings, with the two parties involved will be arranged, with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the victim is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic affect for both the victim and the bully.
- If further support is required by the bullies or victims the school will supply names of those who may help..

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

- 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 e.g.
  - Pastoral care system
  - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
  - Tutor/Year head system
  - Care team / Student Support Team
  - Group work such as circle time

- If pupils require counselling of further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour. NEPS, HSE, CAMS.

  Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

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 grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ [date].

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)
Date: _____ Date: _____
Date of next review: _____ 43

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 ignored.

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 behaviour.

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.

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

o Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.

Support the establishment and work of student councils.

Siniú an Cathaoirleach: _____ Date:_____

Síniú an Príomhóide: _____ Date:_____