



# Anti-Bullying Policy



**Anti-Bullying Policy (updated November 2018)**

**SECTION 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 SCOIL THOMÁIS has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour. This policy complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.

**SECTION 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:

**Fostering a positive school culture and climate which**

- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
- encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment;
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

**Effective leadership at all levels ie school staff, parents and pupils**

**A school-wide approach to the recognition of, the rejection of and the reporting of bullying behaviour.**

**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

**Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;**

**Supports for staff to assist them in investigating and dealing with reports of bullying behaviour;**

**Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour; and**

**Regular review and evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy**

**SECTION 3:** In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* the definition of bullying:

**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.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with Scoil Thomáis Code of Behaviour.

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 will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with Scoil Thomáis 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.

**APPENDIX 1 gives specific examples of bullying behaviour - this list is not exhaustive**

**Additional Information on different types of bullying: *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools S.2***

**SECTION 4:** In Scoil Thomáis the relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

1. **Class Teacher** (initially)
  2. **Pastoral Care Postholder** for the year group by referral from Class Teacher
  3. **Principal/ Deputy Principal** by referral from Class Teacher & Pastoral Care Postholder or as necessary
- IMPORTANT NOTE:** Any teacher may act as the relevant teacher should circumstances warrant it.

**SECTION 5:** The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber bullying & identity based bullying) that will be used by Scoil Thomáis are as follows: The Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, including the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes support the anti-

bullying policy. The Stay Safe Programme is taught to selected classes ( Senior Infants, First, Third, Fifth) each year. Parents are invited to an evening Information Meeting (usually in February) to explain the content of the programme .

The school's anti-bullying policy will be discussed with the pupils. Scoil Thomáis will develop a school **Anti-Bullying Charter** which will be displayed in all classrooms and in prominent places around the school.

**Awareness Raising Exercises for class groups (2<sup>nd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup>)** will be taught at intervals each year. These exercises will proactively raise awareness amongst pupils about the nature and extent of bullying behaviour, and the consequences of and unacceptability of bullying behaviour. Pupils will also be made aware of their own personal responsibility if bullying behaviour is witnessed.

( Reference: Anti Bullying Campaign Website - [www.antibullyingcampaign.ie](http://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie))

**Pupils will be taught rules for keeping safe from bullies** (From *Personal Safety Skills- Stay Safe Programme*) i.e

(1) Say 'No' using assertive body language and eye contact, (2) Get Away, (3) Tell Someone

**Teaching strategies that make use of cooperative and collaborative learning** are used regularly across all curricular areas. This helps to build acceptance of and respect for other pupils and helps pupils work more cooperatively with others.

Methodologies to explore and express feelings in a safe and respectful environment e.g. circle time and role play will be also used by teachers with a view to preventing bullying.

**Teachers and non-teaching school staff regularly praise and positively reinforce acceptable and/or improved pupil behaviour**--- this helps in creating a school culture which discourages bullying type behaviour. Positive self-esteem is fostered

among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success. As self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour, Scoil Thomáis, through both its curricular and extra-curricular classes, provide pupils with opportunities to develop positive self-worth.

**School Staff and Postholders with special responsibility for pastoral care are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/ who are being bullied.** Particular attention is also focused on pupils with SEN.

Cyber-Bullying at school requires access to technology. In Scoil Thomáis, pupils working with technology have access to the internet only under the supervision of teacher. Pupils do not have access to their mobile/smartphones during the school day.

**Prevention and awareness raising measures will also deal explicitly with cyber-bullying in the senior classes.**

The WEBWISE programme includes prevention and awareness raising lessons which focus on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also on developing a culture of reporting concerns about cyber-bullying. Senior classes to be involved in awareness raising lessons to coincide with Internet Safety Day ( February each year) .

**Identity based & homophobic insults** will be treated in exactly the same way as racist or other insults- it will be explained to pupils that such insults are hurtful and are not acceptable.

**Ongoing training and support for school staff** on recognizing bullying behaviour and dealing with reports of bullying behaviour and in implementing Scoil Thomáis Anti-Bullying Policy.

**Preparation of a Parent Advice Sheet** to alert about the nature of bullying behaviour, how to recognize signs of bullying and how to report concerns to the school. This information will also be included in the Infant Induction meeting each year.

**The school will co-operate with Scoil Thomáis Parents Association** in providing for information sessions for parents on bullying and on the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

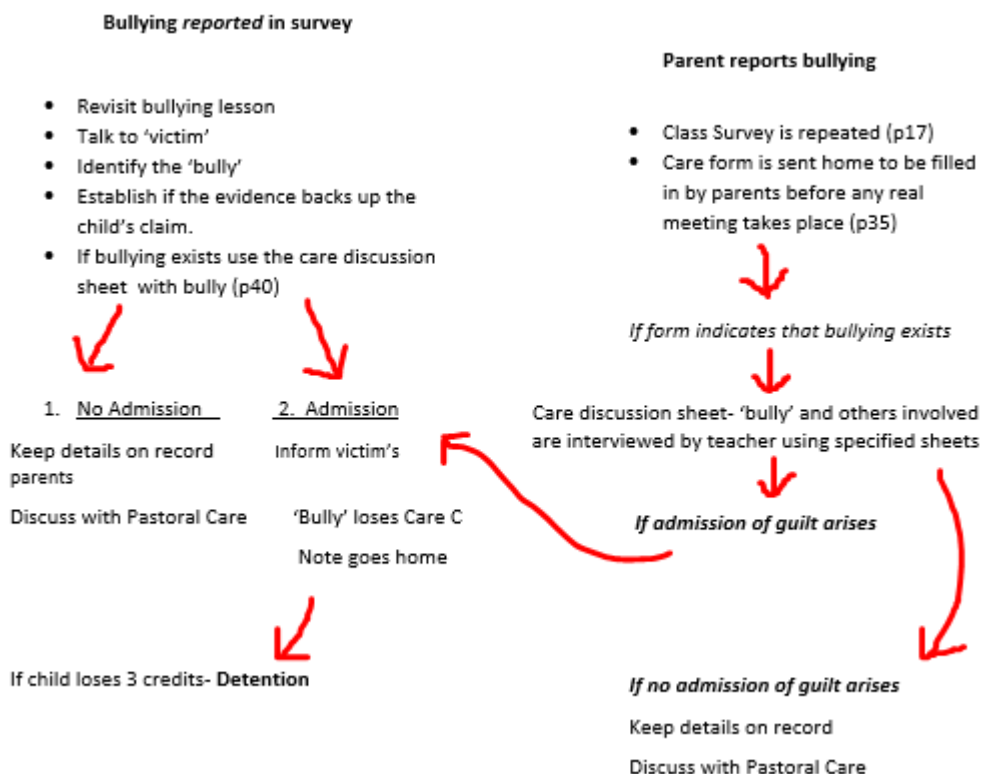
**Parents contribute to and support the school's policy on bullying** by encouraging positive behaviour both at home and at school, by being vigilant for signs and symptoms of bullying, and by communicating concerns to the school.

**SECTION 6: Procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by Scoil Thomáis for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows,**

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying Behaviour

- **Non-teaching staff** ie school secretary, SNAs, caretakers & cleaners must report, to the relevant teacher, any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or reported to them;
- **All reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with** by the relevant Teacher, normally the CLASS TEACHER  
(and if deemed necessary) the Postholder with responsibility for Pastoral Care, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end.

The following steps will be followed in response to a bullying allegation:



*NOTE: Whilst the school will adhere to the above procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying issues it may be necessary for the relevant Teacher/s and Principal/Deputy Principal to modify aspects of the above steps when dealing with younger pupils and SEN pupils. This to ensure that the resolution of bullying issues is dealt with in a manner that is appropriate to the age and understanding of the pupil/s involved.*

### **Procedures for Recording Bullying Behaviour**

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

- While all reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, (and if deemed necessary) the Postholder with responsibility for Pastoral Care, the relevant teacher/s will keep records of the actions taken and any interviews with those involved regarding same; (c/f school report templates modified from Anti-Bullying Campaign.ie)
- The relevant teacher will use the recording template to record the bullying behaviour.
- Parents will be notified if bullying is deemed to have taken place.

All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the Principal/Deputy Principal Office.

Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures. In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

### **SECTION 7: Established Intervention Strategies**

**Bullying as part of a continuum of behaviour:** It is also important to note that bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue. Cases arise where behaviour can escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. To ensure that such cases are dealt with appropriately this bullying policy is linked to Scoil Thomáis Code of Behaviour. Referral will be made to NEPS, CAMHS and other external agencies and authorities where appropriate.

#### **Referral of serious cases to the HSE/TUSLA**

In relation to bullying in schools, Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 (Children First) and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools provide that in situations where "the incident is serious

and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the TUSLA Children and Family Agency with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan".

Serious instances of bullying behaviour will, in accordance with the *Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, be referred to the TUSLA Children and Family Agency and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Whilst all reports of bullying will be investigated by the relevant teacher it must be stated that where the incidents of bullying are

occurring outside of the school environment and/or outside of school hours and/or involving persons who are not pupils in the school --- the school may not be able to fully deal with these matters. In such cases the school will make all reasonable efforts to

co-operate with parents in assisting them to resolve the issues. The school may also direct those involved to the appropriate support agencies ie Gardaí/Community Garda Service, Health Service Executive/TUSLA, or other relevant community service.



## Anti-Bullying Policy (updated November 2018)

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows *Support for pupils who have been victims of bullying behaviour as follows:*

- Ending the bullying behaviour through awareness raising and restorative intervention,
- Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
- Changing the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the identification of those responsible and the resolution of bullying situations,
- Directing counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner,
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).
- Implementing a 'buddy system' in the school (if applicable),

*Support for pupils who have been identified as having engaged in bullying behaviour as follows:*

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet',
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable action and are praised for this,
- Directing counselling facilities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the pupil,

### SECTION 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.

At least once in every school term, the Principal will report to the Board of Management on the overall number of bullying cases reported (by reference to bullying recording template APPENDIX 3 cases) since the previous report to

the Board and (ii) confirm that all cases referred to have been or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools*.

### Section 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.

### SECTION 10: This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on

**SECTION 11:** This policy will be 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.

**SECTION 12:** This policy should be read in conjunction with the current School Code of Behaviour & Procedures for Suspension and Expulsions. The implementation of the Anti-Bullying Policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Patron and the Department.



Appendix 1.

*Bullying (intentional, repetitive, hurtful behaviour) can take a number of forms.*

*These may include any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):*

- **Repeated aggressive behaviour/attitude/body language, for example:** Shouting and uncontrolled anger  
Personal insults, Verbal abuse  
Offensive language directed at an individual, Continually shouting or dismissing others  
Public verbal attacks/criticism  
Domineering behaviour  
Open aggression  
Offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact
- **Intimidation, either physical, psychological or emotional, for example:** Treating in a dictatorial manner  
Ridicule  
Persistence  
+ slugging  
Deliberate staring with the intent to discomfort  
Persistent rudeness in behaviour and attitude toward a particular individual  
Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. personal life/family  
Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. social life or schoolwork
- **Interference with property, for example:** Stealing/damaging books or equipment  
Stealing/damaging clothing or other property  
Demanding money with menaces  
Persistently moving, hiding or interfering with property  
Marking/defacing property
- **Undermining/Public or Private Humiliation, for example:** Condescending tone  
Deliberately withholding significant information and resources  
Writing of anonymous notes  
Malicious, disparaging or demeaning comments  
Malicious tricks/derogatory joke, Knowingly spreading rumours  
Belittling others' efforts, their enthusiasm or their new idea, Derogatory or offensive nicknames (name---calling)  
Using electronic or other media for any of the above  
(cyber bullying, Disrespectfully mimicking a particular

individual in his/her absence Deliberately refusing to  
address issues focusing instead on the person

- **Ostracising or isolating, for example:**

Deliberately marginalising an individual

Deliberately preventing a person from  
joining a group

Deliberately preventing from joining in an activity, schoolwork---related  
or recreational Blaming a pupil for things s/he did not do