



LIOSMÓR MOCHUDA NATIONAL SCHOOL
Big Trees from Small Acorns Grow

Anti-Bullying Policy Statement

Introductory Statement:

Liosmór Mochuda school community believes that each pupil has the right to an education free from fear and intimidation. Therefore bullying of any kind is not tolerated. All pupils and staff contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school.

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 Liosmór Mochuda National School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy statement within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy statement 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:**
 - 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.**
3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

See Table A (6.1.5. Procedures): Key elements of a positive school culture and climate, and also Appendix 2: Practical tips for building a school culture and climate.

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.

This definition includes a wide range of behaviour, whether verbal or written, whether physical or social, whether targeting a person or property, whether carried out directly or indirectly or through any electronic or other medium, which could harm a pupil or undermine his/her self-esteem or self-confidence.

Appendix 10 gives a list of specific examples of bullying behaviour. This list is not exhaustive. Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* and in the Appendix 1 of this Policy Statement.

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

Section 6.8, 6.8.3 and 6.8.4 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools

- The member of teaching staff has responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying is referred to as the "relevant teacher". **This is each class teacher in Liosmór Mochuda National School as determined by School Management.**
 - **This said, any teacher/staff member may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.**
 - A consistent and clear approach to dealing with bullying if/when it occurs is essential to effective practice.
 - A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school
 - Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.
5. The prevention of bullying is an integral part of the day to day running of Liosmór Mochuda. Education is a key part of this. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and consideration will be given to strategies aimed at

approaching 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

- Supporting awareness raising measures across the curriculum and across all aspects of bullying, these should be appropriate to the type of bullying and take into account the age and gender of the pupils involved. All members of the Liosmór Mochuda community are encouraged to gain, in as far as possible, an understanding of what bullying is and how the school deals with bullying behaviour.
- Addressing issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying(including homophobic and transphobic bullying), where appropriate.
- Engaging pupils in addressing problems when they arise.
- Building empathy, respect and resilience in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Building self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour; we endeavour to do this through curricular activities, providing pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.
- Developing programmes to enhance the pupil's awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects, dealing explicitly with the issue of identity-based bullying.
 - Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying - This is best done through S.P.H.E. if and only if it is deemed necessary and appropriate.
 - Cyber Bullying – The best way in which to address this is to prevent it happening in the first place. Educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. Central to this is the involvement of a school-wide approach as well as the involvement of parents. The school needs to consider the scope for cyber-bullying to occur as a result of access to technology from within the school, access which is limited. **The school will endeavour to inform parents on the issues surrounding cyber-bullying and their responsibilities in this matter as the children will most likely become engaged in cyber-bullying while outside school.**
 - S.E.N. Needs – Our school approach to tackling and preventing bullying will take particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with S.E.N. These children should be educated in how to report bullying and pupils should be made aware of the unacceptability of bullying due to disability or special educational needs. (Policies pertaining to bullying join up with other relevant school policies and supports and we endeavour to ensure that all the services that provide for S.E.N. pupils work together.) Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with S.E.N. include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from Primary to Post-Primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.

- Where possible we will endeavour to encourage teachers to attend regular training and updating in the area of bullying, how to deal with it and its prevention when and where possible.
- A regular awareness day may be considered and could help the parents of a pupil who is being bullied the confidence to approach the school and also help send a clear message to the parents of a pupil who is engaged in bullying behaviour that they have a major responsibility in addressing their child's behaviour.
- We realise that the attitude of the teachers can influence bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiative. This includes addressing topics around bullying in areas such as S.P.H.E. and integrating this topic across S.P.H.E. as well as other curricular issues. The **Stay Safe Programme and Walk Tall Programme** as well as R.S.E. also allow for a chance to deal positively with the many types of bullying, as well as how we report it and deal with us. Dealing with this topic can be done through various media forms (PowerPoint, Video, Newspaper etc). In addition to this, consideration will be given to the teaching of the programme lessons from '**Anti-Bullying Campaign**' will be taught yearly.
- Through the teaching of all subjects teachers are encouraged to foster an attitude of respect for all, promote diversity, address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. Teachers are encouraged to look at bullying throughout the subject areas, for example colonisation or dictatorship in History/Geography etc. P.E. lends an opportunity for channelling and learning how to control aggression.
- The members of Liosmór Mochuda realise the need for good supervision and monitoring measures to detect bullying early and prevent it whenever possible. 'Hot-Spots' and 'Hot-Times' will be identified to facilitate early intervention.
- Substitute teachers are made aware of procedures when it is deemed necessary.
- See Appendix 11.

Implementation of curricula:

- The full implementation of the SPHE curricula and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme, Anti-Bullying Campaign.
- School wide delivery of lessons on **Cyber Bullying**, where appropriate, (Web wise Primary teachers' resources). The school will endeavour to list every resource related to the SPHE curriculum, and make a list of supports.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

- The school will endeavour to implement the advice in “Sexual Orientation advice for schools” (RSE Primary, see bullying booklet attached after appendix).

Links to other policies:

- Listed here are school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying:
 - Code of Behaviour
 - Child Protections Policy
 - Supervision of Pupils
 - Acceptable Use policy
 - Attendance
 - Sporting Activities/Tours.

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 (Refer to Guidelines 6.8.9.)

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved, rather than to apportion blame;

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

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

Reporting bullying behaviour:

- Any pupil or parents/guardians may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach:

A consistent and clear approach to dealing with bullying when it occurs is essential to effective practice.

School authorities will endeavour to ensure that the school has clear procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying and that these are set out in the school's anti-bullying policy. See Appendix 12 for more information.

The **Board of Management** must ensure that the school has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour and these must be documented in the school's anti-bullying policy. All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

Follow up and recording:

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

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
 - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
 - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Where a parents/guardians is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parents/guardians)has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents/guardians of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of bullying behaviour:

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

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

Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred:

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. Consideration needs to be given to where the records will be made e.g. incident book. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher

- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred:

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- The school in consultation with the relevant teacher/s have developed the protocol for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher – In the filing cabinet in the office.

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures):

- The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 7** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
 - a) In cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and
 - b) Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable – Incidents warranting suspension.

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at **Appendix 7** must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at **Appendix 7** does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

The school must realise that behaviour warranting suspension or expulsion must be recorded and reported immediately to the principal. These should be in line with the school's code of behaviour.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. Due consideration needs to be given to where these records are kept, who has access to them, and how long they will be retained. Decisions around record keeping should be noted in this policy – Documents are retained until children are 21.

Established intervention strategies (pending in-service):

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

- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires
- Peer mediation where suitable training has been given

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:

- A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied must be in place. Such pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.
- A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour must also be part of the school's intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities should be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. It is, therefore, important that the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.
- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.
- 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
 - 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.
- 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 the school endeavours to have the 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.

Other relevant information:

- We plan to follow the lessons laid out by www.antibullyingcampaign.ie - See resources folder.

- Agreed appropriate monitoring and supervision practices in the school – See Supervision Policy
- Bullying danger spots been identified – At the back of the school, teachers endeavour to circulate regularly here.
- Student support and care supports are measured in the school’s ability to counteract bullying behaviour quickly and appropriately without apportioning blame.
- Pupils, in particular senior pupils, are encouraged to be involved as a resource to assist in counteracting bullying through areas such as a mentoring/buddy system .
- In relation to Acceptable Use Policy in the school are the following issues addressed:
 - All Internet sessions supervised by a teacher.
 - The school regularly monitors pupils’ Internet usage.
 - Pupils have been instructed to use only approved class accounts for email purposes and to use these only under teacher supervision where appropriate.
 - Pupils have been instructed to access only those chat rooms, discussion forums and messaging or other electronic communication fora that have been approved by the school – Which is limited.

(Note that the Schools Broadband Programme has blocked all social networking sites on the basis that they waste time and take up too much of the bandwidth which is been provided for educational purposes only. Many other sites are blocked by the school’s broadband, ones deemed uneducational).

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 from the school office) 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: _____
(Principal)

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____