

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 S.N. Réalt na Mara, Rosses Point, Co. Sligo (Roll No. 17641J) 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 by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in September 2013.

2. The Board of Management of S.N. Réalt na Mara 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) 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;

(b) Effective leadership

(c) A school-wide approach

(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

(e) 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;

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

(g) Supports for staff

(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and

(i) 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 (DES 2013)*. (See P.3)

Examples of bullying behaviours:

Please note the following lists are non-exhaustive.

<p>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • The “look” • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
<p>Cyber Bullying</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denigration: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation • Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name • Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

Identity Based Behaviours Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).	
Homophobic and Transgender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g. gay, queer, lesbian...using labels in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone’s friends away • “Bitching” • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The “look” • Use or terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person’s disability • Setting others up for ridicule

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying in S.N. Réalt na Mara are all members of the Teaching Staff i.e. Principal, Deputy Principal, Class teachers, Learning Support teacher, Resource teacher.

While any teacher (Class teachers, Special Education teachers i.e. Learning Support teacher, Resource teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it), it is advised that those with concerns about bullying should first make contact with the Class teacher.

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

- In S.N. Réalt na Mara, we endorse a school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community. The basis of our school's Code of Behaviour and Discipline is the 4 C's
- Caring
- Courtesy
- Co-operation
- Consideration

Pupils, teachers, and parents have a responsibility to demonstrate the 4 C's every day and to ensure that these characteristics underpin all interactions between members of our school community.(cf Code of Behaviour and Discipline)

- 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.
- 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. Pupils are not permitted to bring mobile phones to school. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Development and promotion of our school's Anti-Bullying code.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are required to sign up to our school's Code of Behaviour and Discipline every year.

- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. a notice board in the school and/or classrooms on the promotion of friendship and bullying prevention; discussion at assemblies led by Principal, Deputy Principal on friendship and prevention of bullying, surveys may be conducted amongst pupils at times deemed appropriate by the Principal and Teaching Staff.
- 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/classwork
 - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
- Administer a confidential questionnaire to all pupils.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the clear protocols that parent(s)/guardian(s) should follow in approaching the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
In our school parents are advised to first make contact with their child’s class teacher to set up an appointment to discuss their concerns.
- Our school’s Acceptable Use Policy states that pupil access to technology within the school is strictly monitored. Pupils are not permitted to have unsupervised access to technology Pupils in S.N. Réalt na Mara are not permitted to bring mobile phones into school.

Implementation of curricula

- Pupils will engage in a curriculum, which offers them an opportunity to experience success and achievement. Our school will aim to be proactive by implementing preventative measures i.e. raising pupils and staff awareness of what constitutes bullying behaviour, emphasising that it is everyone’s responsibility to support those being bullied by reporting incidences of bullying. This work will be carried out in each class as part of the Alive-O Religion programme and through the Social, Personal and Health Education and English curricula. Incidental discussions may also take place arising as a consequence of a particular incident.
- The SPHE curriculum and in particular the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes will be fully implemented in our school.
- Pupils participate in the *Stay Safe Programme* every second year. Pupils will follow the *Walk Tall Programme* to help develop their own self-esteem and to learn skills about decision-making and conflict resolution. Teachers may also supplement work on self –esteem and conflict resolution by using materials from the *Prim-Ed Anti-Bullying programme*.
- School wide delivery of lessons on **Relational aggression Cyber Bullying** (, Be Safe-Be Web wise, Web wise Primary teachers’ resources), **Diversity and Interculturalism**. Prim -Ed workbooks on anti-bullying measures. Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes may be accessed where and when appropriate. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardaí, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- 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 implement the advice in “Sexual Orientation advice for schools” (RSE Primary, see booklet).

Links to other policies

- Other school policies, practices and activities which will be subject to ongoing review to ensure they are compatible with our school's Anti-bullying Policy school are: our school's Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Supervision of pupils procedures, Acceptable Use Policy, Attendance Policy, practices and procedures relating to Sporting activities.
- The Board of Management of S.N. Réalt na Mara has decided that invitations to birthday parties, Communion/ Confirmation parties etc. may not be distributed through the school. Parents should ensure that the invitations are distributed outside school hours.

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.

6.1 Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying (from DES procedures)

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, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) who is concerned about a bullying incident should first approach the child's/children's **class teacher**
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by a relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as Special Needs Assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners , sports coaches must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to a relevant teacher;

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach (see section 6.8.9)

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant) teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;
- Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done 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 at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;
It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher 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 explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school will give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
- Where the relevant teacher has determined 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 school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation **where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school;**

Follow up and recording

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
 - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
 - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
 - 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 will be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 will keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher.

- 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.
- All records will be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. Class teachers/ Special Education teachers' will be responsible for the safe storage of all records compiled by them. These records will be retained by the class teacher/ Special Education teacher during the academic year and forwarded to the Principal/Deputy Principal at year end. The Principal/Deputy Principal may request access to class teachers'/Special Education teachers' notes at any time during the year.

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** 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. In S.N. Réalt na Mara behaviour which would be classified as serious or gross misbehaviour as set out in our School's Code of Behaviour and Discipline will be reported to the Principal/Deputy Principal.

Where the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the Principal. Records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the Office and all records will be kept according to the Records Retention Schedule set out by the Department of Education and Skills and the Joint Managerial Boards of Primary and Post –primary schools available on <http://www.dataprotectionschools.ie/en/Data-Protection-Guidelines/Records-Retention/Retention-Records-Schedule>

Established intervention strategies

- 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
- 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 6.8.16 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
 - Group work such as circle time

- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same e.g. National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS), H.S.E. Such supports may be sought may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

- **Pupils and their parents 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 first ratified by the Board of Management on 19th June 2014.
Section on retention of records updated and ratified by B.o.M. on 26th March 2015.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and will be made available to parents and pupils on request. It will be provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel and published on the school website; it will be made accessible to parents and pupils on request 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 of Education and Skills.

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