

## Gaelscoil Mhic Aodha's Anti-Bullying Policy

### 1. Introduction

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 Mhic Aodha 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. Preventing and Tackling Bullying

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) 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;
- provide for 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. Defining Bullying Behaviour

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.

#### Some examples of bullying behaviours

<b>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.</li><li>• Physical aggression</li><li>• Damage to property</li><li>• Name calling</li><li>• Slagging</li><li>• The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person</li><li>• Offensive graffiti</li><li>• Extortion</li><li>• Intimidation</li><li>• Insulting or offensive gestures</li><li>• The "look"</li><li>• Invasion of personal space</li><li>• A combination of any of the types listed.</li></ul>

### Gaelscoil Mhic Aodha

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<b>Cyber</b>	<p><b>Denigration:</b> Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Harassment:</b> Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual</li> <li>• <b>Impersonation:</b> Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name</li> <li>• <b>Flaming:</b> Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</li> <li>• <b>Trickery:</b> Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online</li> <li>• <b>Outing:</b> Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</li> <li>• <b>Exclusion:</b> Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</li> <li>• <b>Cyber stalking:</b> Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety</li> <li>• Silent telephone/mobile phone call</li> <li>• Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls</li> <li>• Abusive text messages</li> <li>• Abusive email</li> <li>• Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles</li> <li>• Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures</li> <li>• Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</li> </ul>
<p><b>Identity Based Behaviours</b>  <b>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation</b> (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).</p>	
<b>Homophobic and Transgender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation</li> <li>• Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation</li> <li>• Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner</li> <li>• Physical intimidation or attacks</li> <li>• Threats</li> </ul>
<b>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background</li> <li>• Exclusion on the basis of any of the above</li> </ul>
<b>Relational</b>	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malicious gossip</li> <li>• Isolation &amp; exclusion</li> <li>• Ignoring</li> <li>• Excluding from the group</li> <li>• Taking someone's friends away</li> <li>• "Bitching"</li> <li>• Spreading rumours</li> <li>• Breaking confidence</li> <li>• Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The “look”</li><li>• Use or terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way</li></ul>
<b>Sexual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching</li><li>• Harassment</li></ul>
<b>Special Educational Needs, Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name calling</li><li>• Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs</li><li>• Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying</li><li>• Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.</li><li>• Mimicking a person’s disability</li><li>• Setting others up for ridicule</li></ul>

#### 4. Responsibility for Investigation

The class teacher will have responsibility for investigating and dealing with first incidents of alleged bullying behaviour. A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school but the class teacher should be the first port of call. It is the responsibility of the person to whom the report is made to pass on the relevant information to the class teacher of the child/children concerned. Individual teachers will take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school’s Code of Behaviour. In some instances, the deputy principal or principal may become involved immediately in the investigation. The procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour are set out in section 6 of this policy.

#### 5. Education and Prevention Strategies

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:

##### 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.
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.

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- 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.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school.
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures - annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars.
- 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(Quiet word in private)
  - Hand note up with homework.
  - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. Parents arrange a meeting to discuss the matter with the Class teacher.
- The implementation of the Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
- Supports available to school: GP, HSE, CAHMS, NEPS

## Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on **Cyber Bullying** (Web wise Primary teachers' resources) **Diversity and Interculturalism**,
- 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

Code of Behaviour, Child Protections policy, Equality Policy, Acceptable Use Policy

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## 6. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

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.

### First Report of Bullying

Any person in the school community, a pupil, staff member, parent/ guardian may report an incident of a serious negative behaviour towards another individual.

- The class teacher will usually deal with the complaint. In investigating and dealing with negative behaviour, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether potential bullying has occurred and how best the situation can be resolved. If in investigating the incident, previous unreported incidents are referred to, the staff member should take note and record this information, but treat this report as the first incident formally noted.
- Teachers will take a calm, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of potential bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents/ guardians. In any incident of alleged bullying, the teacher engage in a 14 Day Observation Period document.
- If deemed appropriate, parents will be notified if further investigation is needed
- A written record of the incident will be kept in the class teacher's records and on Aladdin. **As bullying is defined as behaviour that is "systematic and ongoing", a first incident of aggressive behaviour is not viewed as bullying unless there are subsequent incidents. Negative behaviour will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.**
- If the teacher concludes that this negative type of behaviour could lead to bullying, the child/children involved will be made aware of this and the consequences of similar behaviours reoccurring (as outlined in the following sections).
- Any report of cyberbullying will be dealt with as bullying on the first report and parents will be notified on the first report.

### Second Report of Bullying

- This is dealt with by the class teacher. In our school, this means another 14 Day Observation Period will be carried out as well as relevant parents/guardians being alerted to this. Follow up calls will also apply.
- An incident report will be written and filed in the class folder and on Aladdin.
- Parents of the children involved will be informed of the incident and a meeting will be arranged between them and the class teacher.
- The child that is allegedly being bullied is given a chance to give their side of the story in a confidential manner.
- Records will be kept of parent/teacher meetings and strategies to address behaviours.

### Third and Subsequent Report(s) of Bullying

- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her. Every effort will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied, with his/her parents present.
- An appropriate intervention strategy will be determined in consultation between the relevant teacher, an Príomhoide Tánaisteach and/or An Príomhoide, as appropriate. Parents will also be consulted.
- Where disciplinary sanctions are necessary, these will occur in line with the school's Code of Behaviour.

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- It will be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where such disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
- 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. The school will seek permission of the relevant parents / guardians in question first. Research suggests that this can have a positive therapeutic effect and considerably reduce the risk of reoccurrence.

## **Review Process**

In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately resolved/addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the Standard Recording Template at Appendix 3. In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately resolved/addressed with support from the 14 Day Observation Period document, the relevant teacher, as part of his/her professional judgement, will 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 or their parents

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.

At every stage of the process, parents and pupils are expected and required to cooperate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. Any lack of co-operation will be referred to the Board of Management

## **Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach**

In investigating and dealing with bullying, the class 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 should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- All interviews should 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 class teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should 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 should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;

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- Each member of a group should 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 class teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved will be contacted at immediately to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. 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 should 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;

## 7. Supporting pupils affected by Bullying

### Intervention Strategies

International research shows that interventions that engage perpetrators in understanding the impact of their actions and in taking responsibility for making up for hurt caused are most effective. Research also suggests that schools should make use of a combination of methods to achieve this. Accordingly, where it has been established that a bullying incident has occurred, the school will draw upon the following acknowledged intervention strategies:

- Strengthening the Target
- Mediation
- Restorative Practice
- Support Group Method

In instances of seriously malicious bullying or repeated bullying the school will take The Direct Sanctions Approach. See Appendix 5 for an outline of these interventions.

## 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.



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## 9. Prevention of Harassment

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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. Ratification, Communication and Implementation of the Policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 15/06/22.

This policy has been 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.

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 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.

Signed: Laura Mhic Eochaidh  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Norma Ní Chonchúir  
(Principal)

Date: 15/06/22

Date: 15/06/22

Date of next review: June 2023

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## APPENDIX 1: SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING PRACTICES

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.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- 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 outdoor supervision.

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## Appendix 2: Informal Recording Template

### Tuairisc ar Bhulaíocht Líomhnaithe

Ainm an dalta (atá ag fulaingt: Rang:
Ainm(neacha) a luaitear leis an mí-iompar: Rang:
Múinteoir Ranga:
Duine atá ag tuairisciú: Dáta:
Cur síos gear ar an iompar agus a thionchar
Gnímh Tógtha
Sínithe: Dáta:

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## Appendix 3 Formal Template for recording bullying behaviour

### 1. Name of pupil 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 (tick relevant box(es))\*

Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))\*

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

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### 6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) \*

Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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### 9. Details of actions taken

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant Teacher) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal \_\_\_\_\_

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## Appendix 4 Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
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 pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of 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 not therefore 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 (by 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 \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

To: Coiste na dTuismitheoirí

The Board of Management of Gaelscoil Mhic Aodha 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 15/6/22.
- 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 Laura Mhic Eochaidh  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 15/06/22

Signed Norma Ní Chonchúir  
Principal

Date 15/06/22

## APPENDIX 5: OVERVIEW OF INTERVENTIONS

The following methods of intervention are based upon an analysis of the major alternative and supplementary strategies being used to address cases of bullying encountered in schools.

- Each has its own rationale and appropriate areas of application, depending on the nature of the case. This could vary widely, for instance in terms of severity, group involvement and whether there has been any provocation.
- Each has its unique strengths and limitations regarding its use in specific cases.
- Training in the application of each of the methods is needed, some more than others.
- It is important to recognise that the methods are NOT alternatives to taking considered proactive steps to prevent bullying from occurring, such as good classroom management, class discussions of bullying, social skills training, promoting positive bystander behaviour, developing peer support. Such steps can reduce the number of cases that occur.
- Each method assumes a whole school approach and a well-informed understanding of the reasons why each may be used in particular circumstances.

## APPROACHES

Below is a description of approaches which may be used when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour in our school:

- **Direct Sanctions approach**

This approach makes use of disciplinary procedures or penalties as a punishment and/or a deterrent to prevent further bullying. These may include verbal reprimands; meetings with parents; temporary removals from class; withdrawal of privileges; school community service; detentions and internal exclusion from a group activity; short-term exclusion; and permanent exclusion. Can be used: In serious cases, and in instances of repeated non-compliance

- **Strengthening the target**

This involves systematically helping the victim to deal more effectively with the person or persons who might seek to bully him or her. Can be used: In cases of low level (usually verbal) banter when it is believed the victim can be trained to cope by acquiring more appropriate social and verbal skills.

- **Mediation**

This is a process in which pupils in conflict, including bully/victim conflicts, are invited to take part in a session with a mediator, a staff member or peer mediator, to help resolve their differences without any compulsion. Can be used: When students in dispute both want help from a mediator. (Children who bully only rarely want to seek mediation.)

- **Restorative Practice**

This involves getting the perpetrator to reflect upon his or her unacceptable behaviour, experience a sense of remorse and act to restore a damaged relationship with both the victim and the school community. It may take place (i) at a meeting with just the bully and the victim (ii) with a group or class of students involved in bullying behaviour or (iii) at community conference attended by those involved in the bullying plus significant others such as parents. Can be used: In cases in where the perpetrator can be induced to become sincerely remorseful and act restoratively.



# Gaelscoil Mhic Aodha



- Support Group Method

This is a non-punitive strategy used with groups of students who have engaged in bullying someone. Once identified by the victim, the 'bullies' meet with the teacher and other students, who have been selected because they are expected to be supportive of the victim (who is not present). Knowledge of the distress experienced by the victim is shared with the group and each member is required to accept responsibility and say how he or she will help that person. The outcome is monitored. Can be used: In cases of bullying by groups where the perpetrators are prepared to cooperate at a meeting with a teacher plus other students and assist in putting things right.

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## Gaelscoil Mhic Aodha

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