**Scoil Naomh Lorcan**

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**Anti-Bullying Policy**

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| In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behavior guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Lorcan has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school’s overall code of behaviour. |

**Statement on Bullying**

The whole school community of Scoil Naomh Lorcan believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore it does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the wellbeing of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

An 'Anti-Bullying Team,' made up of staff members, exists to cultivate an environment free from bullying.

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, (*thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted*) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using a “Reform, not Blame” approach.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, in school, involving members of the school community they should notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

Pupils’ participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.



**Anti-Bullying Policy – Scoil Naomh Lorcan, Omeath**

**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 Naomh Lorcan has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school’s overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013.

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

**(a) A positive school culture and climate which**

* is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity.
* acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
* encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment.
* models respectful behaviour at all times and promotes respectful relationships across the school community.
* promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
* has the capacity to change in response to pupils’ needs.
* recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
* Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.
* recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupils with a range of life skills.

**(b) Effective leadership**

The school leaders work together to promote a ‘No Tolerance’ motto towards bullying and anti-social behaviour among the staff and pupils.

**(c) A school-wide approach**

Teachers, ancillary staff, parents and pupils work together, with the support of outside agencies to support the ‘No Tolerance of Bullying’ motto.

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

Regular training and communication between staff during either CPD sessions or Staff meetings.

**(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.

**Appendix 1** 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.*

**4.** The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is the Deputy Principal but**any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.**

Initially the class teachers/learning support teacher may deal with the issue, then Deputy Principal and finally the Principal.

**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:

**Education and prevention strategies**

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| **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.
* Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
* School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
* Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
* Involvement of the students e.g. Friendship group in contributing to a safe school environment including Buddy systems and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
* Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school to be displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
* The school’s anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and it is made available to all parent(s)/guardian(s)s on the school website/ on request.
* The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; school or assemblies by teacher on duty.
* 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.
* Niggle box
* 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.
* The development of an 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.
* The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. Walk Tall, Stay Safe Programme, Alive-O, Antibullyingcampaign.ie, Webwise, E.Safety...

**Implementation of curricula*** The implementation of the anti-bullying module in the SPHE curriculum, 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. Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme.
* In 3rd-6th class at least five awareness-raising exercises per school year for each class group (*e.g. from the “Awareness-Raising” strand of the Anti-Bullying Campaign, via its website:* [www.antibullyingcampaign.ie](http://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie)) pro-actively explaining the nature and variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying **(Appendix 3)**
* Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take.
* Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.
* Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour, either spontaneously or through questionnaires that are regularly used in the school.
* School wide delivery of lessons on **Relational aggression** (Alive-O), **Cyber Bullying** (Webwise Primary teachers’ resources, E.Safety), **Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying** (antibullyingcampaign.ie)**Diversity and Interculturalism**(Alive-O).
* 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 implement the advice in “Sexual Orientation advice for schools” (RSE Primary, see booklet).

 **Links to other policies*** Code of Behaviour, Child Protections policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance, Sporting activities.
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***Through presentations or other exercises, the school staff and parents/guardians are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied. They are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the “Relevant Teacher” (in the case of staff members) or any staff member (in the case of parents/guardians).***

 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 ;

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| **6.8.9. 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.**Reporting bullying behaviour*** Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) 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), 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** * In investigating and dealing with bullying, the class teacher/or Deputy Principal who is the Designated Anti-Bullying 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.

**Step-by-Step Action Plan**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, (e.g. the step by step approach available from the *“Dealing with Incidents”* section of the Anti-Bullying Campaign website) **(Appendix 4)** are as follows:*Where possible incidents should be investigated* ***outside the classroom situation*** *to ensure the privacy of all involved;** **Step 1:**The ‘Relevant Teacher’ investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, whether these take place within the school or outside it, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end. The School, through the ‘Relevant Teacher’ reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened, as part of an investigation. This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour. Incidences will be investigated using:

-Incident Report Form -Action Taken Form-Class Survey* **Step 2:** Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are **interviewed** by the Deputy Principal (who is the Designated Anti-Bullying Coordinator) ‘Relevant Teacher’ to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it. **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.
* **Step 3:**In the event that they have been involved in bullying behaviour they are asked to sign a binding promisethat they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s).
* **Step 4:** The 'Relevant Teacher’ does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a "mistake" that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter.Pupils who report bullying therefore are not getting others "in trouble" so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continued. When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will complete a report using the recording template in **the actions taken form** to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. This must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal as applicable.
* **Step 5:** If a pupil has signed such a **promise/agreement** but then chooses to break that promise/ agreement and continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a "mistake." In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed and requested to countersign their daughter/son’s promise.
* **Step 6:** Breach of this additional **promise/agreement** by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities (See sanctions below).**All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school.**
* **Sanctions:**

Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that promise, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:* S/he may be required to sign another promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian;
* Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be contacted by the ‘Relevant Teacher’ and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured;
* Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the ‘Relevant Teacher’ and the Principal and the pupil may be suspended from school.
* The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be expelled from the school.

**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 above (in the Step-by-step action plan) and below; **Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred*** All staff must keep a written record on the Incident Report Form of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the Deputy Principal.
* While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the Deputy teacher, the Deputy Principal must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
* The Deputy teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

**Formal Stage 2-Appendix 5 (From DES Procedures)**The Deputy Principal must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to recordbullying behaviour that has been reportedWhen the recording template is used, it must be retained by the Deputy Principal and a copy maintained by the principal. Records kept locked in Main Filing Cabinet (Photocopier).**Established intervention strategies*** Teacher interviews with all pupils
* Adoption of the Anti-bullying Campaign resources – No Blame Approach.
* 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)s to support school interventions
* Circle Time
* Restorative interviews
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**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) :

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| * 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.

- Buddy / Peer mentoring system - Friendship Week - Group work such as circle time The school’s programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:* **Bullied pupils:**
* Ending the bullying behaviour,
* 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 awareness-raising programme,
* Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
* After resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a victim-impact statement,
* Making adequate 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
* **Bullying pupils:**
* 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 honorable thing and giving them praise for this,
* Making adequate counseling 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),
* Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils’ feelings of self-worth,
* In dealing with negative behavior in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
* In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a “clean sheet” and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.
* 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.**
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**8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and

practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

**9. Prevention of Harassment**

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

**10.** This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [date].

**11**. This policy has been made available to school personnel, Parent’s Association, been published on the school website and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills 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, Parent’s Association, been published on the school website and is readily accessible to parents on request. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 (Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Appendix 1***

**Examples of bullying behaviours (this list is not exhaustive).**

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| **General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying** | * 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.
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| **Cyber** | * **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
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| **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** | * Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation
* Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation
* Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner
* Physical intimidation or attacks
* Threats
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| **Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community** | * 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
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| **Relational** | This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:* 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
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| **Sexual** | * Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching
* Harassment
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| **Special Educational Needs,****Disability** | * 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
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***Appendix 2***

**Procedures to prevent cyber-bullying:**

* Staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management (BoM) will be made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying through the use of appropriate awareness-raising exercises
* Pupils will learn about cyber bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), assemblies, friendship activities and other curriculum projects
* Classes 1st to 6th will participate in class cyberbullying lessons through the use of teaching resources such as WebWise
* Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) will assist in learning about current technologies
* Parents will be provided with information and advice on how to combat cyber bullying
* Pupils will sign an Acceptable Use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) contract
* Parents will be expected to sign an Acceptable Use of ICT contract prior to enrolment and to discuss its meaning with their children
* All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated, recorded, stored in the Principal’s

office and monitored regularly

* The police will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content
* This policy will be reviewed annually. Pupils, parents and staff will be involved in reviewing and revising this policy and any related school procedure.
* Our school’s approach to tackling and preventing bullying will aspire to take particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN, should join up with other relevant school policies and supports and should ensure that all the services that provide for such pupils work together. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN 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.