

Shountrade National School



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Anti-Bullying Policy



Shountrade National School

Shountrade National School Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Children First Act 2015 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Shountrade National School 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 (2013)

Rationale

1. The policy is required to assist Shountrade National School in devising school-based measures to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to increase awareness of bullying behaviour in our school community as a whole e.g. school management, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents as well as those from the local community who interface with the school.
2. Involving and encouraging all members of the school community in developing, formulating and reviewing this policy on bullying promotes partnership, ownership and implementation of a 'living policy,' one which is actively implemented/promoted in the whole school community.
3. The school climate of Shountrade National School and atmosphere are created by the actions of everyone in this school. The behaviour of the adults in a child's life, including parents and teachers, is a significant influence on how a child acts.
4. The Department of Education and Skills requires all schools to have a written policy on bullying.

Links to School's Mission Statement

"Shountrade National School is a co-educational, Catholic, primary school which strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed.

The care of each child is of paramount importance to the staff. As partners, we aim to help the children to develop their holistic potential by providing opportunities for creative and academic development.

The management, staff and pupils endeavour to make this school a welcoming place which celebrates difference, tolerance and respect for others."



Shountrade National School

Shountrade National School will endeavour to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community, to imbue in the pupils respect for people and property and to encourage in them the idea of being responsible. Shountrade N.S. will promote gender equality amongst the teachers and pupils.”



Shountrade National School

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:

1. A positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity; which encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a nonthreatening environment and which promotes respectful relationships across the school community.
2. Effective leadership.
3. A school-wide approach.
4. A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.
5. 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.
6. Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
7. Supports for staff.
8. Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)
9. On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Ref: Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013- Chapter 6, Key Principles of Best Practice.

Policy Aims.

The main aims of an anti-bullying policy are as follows:

1. To create a positive school culture and climate that is inclusive and welcoming of difference.
 2. To create a school climate which is open, supportive and encourages pupils to disclose and discuss bullying behaviour.
 3. To raise awareness amongst the entire school community (including school management, teachers, pupils, parents, volunteers etc.) that bullying is unacceptable behaviour.
 4. To ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring through which all aspects of school activity are kept under observation.
 5. To provide procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour.
 6. To provide procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour.
 7. To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
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Shountrade National School

8. To work with and through the various local agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour.

9. To facilitate ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying policy.

We aspire to fulfill the above aims by fostering an atmosphere of respect, understanding and encouragement between all who teach, work and learn in the school, so that the development and contribution of every individual can be acknowledged and all can work together to benefit personal growth and the common good.



Shountrade National School

Definition of Bullying.

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.'

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

Types of Bullying.

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

Physical aggression: This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

Intimidation: Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying: This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore"(implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".

Cyber-bullying: This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc. In addition, in the context of Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 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.

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 this definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour. A single incident can have a serious effect on a pupil and may also constitute harassment which is legally prohibited in schools under equality legislation.



Shountrade National School

Harassment is any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the nine discriminatory grounds (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).

Name Calling: Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.

Slagging: This behaviour usually refers to the good-natured banter which goes on as part of the normal social interchange between people. However, when this 'slagging' extends to very personal remarks aimed again and again at one individual about appearance, clothing, personal hygiene or involves references of an uncomplimentary nature to members of one's family, particularly if couched in sexual innuendo, then it assumes the form of bullying. It may take the form of suggestive remarks about a pupil's sexual orientation.

Damage to property: Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

Extortion: Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

Identity-based bullying: This includes 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.

Characteristics in Bullying Behaviour

Schools need to recognise that any pupil can be a victim of, or perpetrator of, bullying behaviour. The Victim/The Target.

Any pupil, through no fault of their own, may be bullied. It is common in the course of normal play for pupils to tease or taunt each other. However, at a certain point, teasing and taunting may become forms of bullying behaviour. As pupils are particularly quick to notice differences in others, pupils who are perceived as different are more likely to encounter such behaviour. However, the pupils who are most at risk of becoming victims are those who react in a vulnerable and distressed manner. The seriousness and duration of the bullying behaviour is directly related to the pupil's continuing response to the verbal, physical or psychological aggression.

It is of note that some pupils can unwittingly behave in a very provocative manner which attracts bullying behaviour.

Pupils who are bullied often experience difficulties in speaking up about bullying. The difficulties include:

1. Fear of reprisals
 2. Concerns about being perceived as a "tell-tale" for reporting bullying
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Shountrade National School

3. Concerns about “getting into trouble” with the Principal or teacher for reporting bullying
4. Not having evidence to back up a bullying allegation
5. Not knowing how the matter will be dealt with by the school
6. Not feeling fully confident of being believed

Raising Awareness in the Prevention of Bullying- Education and Prevention Strategies

Shountrade National School will promote a preventative approach to bullying by implementing the following:

- Developing a whole school Anti-Bullying Policy in collaboration with the whole school community of all staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management.
- All teachers will implement the school’s Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme in full. (includes Stay Safe, Walk Tall and Grow in Love programme)
- A copy of the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy/Code of Behaviour will be given to the parents of the incoming Junior Infant class at enrolment. Parents/guardians will be required to sign an undertaking which supports the policy. (Current parents - the revised policy will also be circulated to all current parents on an initial basis and an undertaking of their support for the policy will be sought)
- The Anti-Bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour will be available on-line to all parents and others on the school website www.shountradens.ie
- A hard copy of the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour will be on public display on the school notice boards in the Staff Room and Main Office. A copy will be available to parents and others on request from the school office.

The following anti-bullying initiatives will take place in the school annually:

- Friendship Week- class based/school based fun activities which promote co-operation, sharing, friendship between all the children. Friendship Stop, Circle time, class discussions on friendship, friendship facts e.g. making friends/maintaining friendships/resolving conflict, responsibilities towards one another, etc. will be held.
- Bullying Awareness Week
- Work will be done on the theme in art, poetry, music and drama.
- Each class will devise classroom rules at the beginning of each school year which will promote inclusion, acceptance of difference and respect for one another.
- Anti-Bullying posters may be made, discussed and displayed throughout the school.
- Additional lessons which deal specifically with bullying will be undertaken in each class e.g. ‘Prim-Ed
- The whole school community will be encouraged to become a ‘reporting school’ whereby the whole school community is encouraged to report/speak out if they are being bullied or if they witness a bullying situation.
- When children inform a teacher of a ‘bullying’ situation which occurred outside of school time, the teacher will advise the child to inform his/her parents. The child will be encouraged to ask for their support in resolving the situation.
- A class contract will be signed by all the children in all classes (Junior Infants – Sixth Class) which states that the class is a ‘reporting class’. This contract will be displayed in each classroom after classes have been taught and awareness towards bullying behaviour has been raised.
- A ‘Children’s Advice Sheet’ (attached), which informs children and parents what to do in a bullying situation, will be circulated to all parents at the beginning of each school year.
- Discussion of the underlying principles of the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour will form part of the agenda of all staff meetings.



Shountrade National School

- Where the opportunity arises, guest speakers with an expertise in the area of bullying prevention, will be invited to address pupils, staff and parents.
- Where a bullying situation has occurred, a class teacher will support both the victim and bully in bringing about a change in behaviour and in preventing a recurrence.

Appendix 2 Appendix 3 Appendix 3.1

Procedures for noting and reporting an incident of bullying behaviour

1. All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, should be recorded and investigated.
2. All cases of bullying behaviour by pupils should be referred to the Principal/Deputy Principal.
3. Parents/Guardians of victims and bullies should be informed by the Principal/Deputy Principal following initial investigation of the incident so that they are given an opportunity to discuss the matter. They are then in a position to support their children before a crisis occurs.
4. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to discuss their concerns with a staff member if they feel their child is being bullied. Parents/Guardians should not assume that the problem will go away.
5. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not telling tales but behaving responsibly.
6. Ancillary staff and parents should be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying witnessed by them to a teacher/Principal.
7. Where a case relating to a pupil remains unresolved at school level, it will be referred to the school's Board of Management.

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

1. Teachers are best advised to take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by either pupils, staff or parents/guardians. Such incidents are best investigated outside the classroom situation to avoid the public humiliation of the victim or the pupil engaged in bullying, in an attempt to get both sides of the story. 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. Teachers who are investigating cases of bullying behaviour should keep a written record of their discussions with those involved. The school's Incident Report Forms should be used. These report forms are available from the office and all teachers have a supply of these forms in their classroom. (Appendix 1)
They will be stored securely by the Principal in the office. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write their own account of the incident. It is school policy to request the assistance of another staff member in such investigations.
2. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, investigating teacher(s) 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.
3. The Principal will speak to the investigating teacher and will review the written information provided and will hold further investigations if necessary with the assistance of another teacher.
4. If a gang (more than 1 individual) is involved, each member should be interviewed individually and then the gang should be met as a group. Each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is



Shountrade National School

clear about what everyone else has said.

If it is concluded that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and try to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view. Each member of the gang should be helped to handle the possible pressures that often face them from the other members after interview by the teacher.

5. In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, the Principal will meet separately with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the two parties involved, as appropriate in the presence of another teacher. The Principal will outline the results of the investigation and will explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy.

The following steps will be taken –

- Shountrade National School will utilise an observational and investigative approach in its initial stage of resolving the situation. All staff will be made aware of the importance of this practice.
 - A verbal undertaking will be given by the perpetrator to stop the offending behaviour. This will be done in the presence of the perpetrator's parent(s)/guardian(s), the Principal and another teacher. The perpetrator will also be requested to apologise to the victim in the presence of the Principal and another teacher and give an undertaking that the offending behaviour will stop.
 - The Principal and staff will monitor and evaluate the situation, providing support to both victim and perpetrator.
 - The class teacher will also support both the victim and bully in bringing about a change in behaviour and in preventing a recurrence.
 - With any reported incident of bullying behaviour within the school, the parents will be kept apprised of developments and stages of the investigation as the situation dictates and as early as reasonably possible.
 - If the bullying recurs, a formal contract will be entered into by both parties and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of both parties will be informed. The contract will be monitored regularly by the Principal with the assistance of the class teacher and another member of staff to see that the situation is resolved.
 - If after the above, the bullying behaviour recurs, a formal meeting of the perpetrator, his/her parent(s)/guardian(s), the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be held and a formal suspension in line with the schools Code of Behaviour may/will occur. The Chairperson will have the authority to enact an immediate suspension or in certain circumstances may issue a final Chairperson's warning to the perpetrator e.g. where an extended period of time has elapsed since the last incident. The school's Code of Behaviour will be invoked from this point on.
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Shountrade National School

Adult behaviour and bullying of children

General: Concerns in relation to inappropriate adult behaviour are best resolved through early contact between the parties concerned. This early contact between the parent/class teacher or the class teacher/parent or indeed any other adults in the school community, will help resolve most issues at this initial stage. Failing resolution at this stage, the school Principal should be involved. If the situation is still not resolved at this stage, the Chairperson and finally the Board of Management should be involved. This staged procedure is outlined in the agreed Complaints Procedure for schools. The full text of this procedure is available from the school.

Notwithstanding the above, the Board of Management has adopted and implemented, without modification, the document 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools' as school policy. Adult bullying of children is dealt with as a child protection issue in this document.

An allegation of bullying, made by a child or by the parent/guardian of a child against another adult within the school community (school employee, another parent/guardian/other) will be dealt with in line with procedures as outlined in Chapter 5 of 'Child Protection for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.' In investigating all allegations of bullying, the principles of natural justice and fair procedure shall be applied.

If school staff suspect or are alerted to possible child bullying by another adult (school employee or parent/guardian/other), they are obliged to refer this matter to the Designated Liaison Person, who will seek advice from the Health Service Executive (HSE). The HSE will then assess the situation and provide support for the child concerned.

All schools are obliged to follow the procedures as outlined in this document without modification. Reference should be made to the school's Child Protection Policy (Summary Document) and to the recently published document 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools' for further information. These documents are available from the school office on request, are on display on the school notice board and are available on the school website www.shountradens.ie

In all its policies, practices and activities, Shountrade National School will adhere to principles of best practice in Child Protection and Welfare as outlined in 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools' and in 'Children First –National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011.'

Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place as per Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

Appendix 2 Appendix 3 Appendix 3.1



Shountrade National School

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.

Communication of this policy

This policy has been made available to school personnel. It is published on the school website and is on display in school office and Staff Room. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

Implementation and Review

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Success Criteria.

The success of this policy will be measured against its success in preventing bullying behaviour in the school. Feedback from pupils, parents and staff will inform this decision.

Review:

Signed: _____
Chairperson Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____



Shountrade National School

Appendix 1

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

Other Pupil

Parent

Teacher

Other

Other

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

Playground

Classroom

Corridor

Toilets

School Bus

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

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) * Physical Aggression

Damage to Property

Isolation/Exclusion

Name Calling

Cyber-bullying

Intimidation

Malicious Gossip

Other (specify)

7. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

8. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____



Shountrade National School

Appendix 2

WHAT TO TELL CHILDREN IF THEY ARE BEING BULLIED

- **What to do:**

Act as confidently as you can. Face them and tell them clearly to stop. Try and be calm and move away from them.

- **Don't hit out.**

If someone is bullying you, don't try to hit/kick them. You may get badly hurt in a fight and even if you don't, the bully can sometimes use how you hit them against you, and make it seem like you are the bully

- **If they call you names.**

If they tease you or slag you off, try and laugh it off. Don't let them see that they have hurt you. Bullies like to get a reaction, if they don't get one there is no point in them bullying you.

- **Remember, it's not about you.**

Often people who bully other people do it to make themselves feel better, because they are unhappy, at school or at home. Remember that they have the problem, not you. Don't believe what they say to you, and don't blame yourself.

- **Tell your friends/people you can trust in class**

Tell them what is going on and how you feel. Ask them to come with you to tell a teacher if you are afraid. Ask them to stand up with you against the bully.

- **Tell an adult you trust-** If you're being bullied, tell an adult about it.

- **Talk to: Your parents** - Someone in your family - Your teacher - A Helpline

- **Don't hit back with violence.**

Getting into a physical fight with someone can be dangerous. If you are afraid to tell because it might make things worse, tell this to the person you talk to and ask them to find a way to help you.

- **What To Say When You Tell** - Tell them what has happened; Who is doing it; How often it has happened; Did anyone see or hear what went on? What have you tried to do about it?

Cyber Bullying advice for children. (Webwise)

- Don't reply
 - Keep the Message
 - Block the sender. (Phone)
 - Tell someone you trust
 - Report Problem to the people who can do something about it – website Operators, mobile phone operators etc.
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Appendix 3

Shountrade National School

NOTE: www.webwise.ie is an excellent resource for Parent/ Guardian and child internet safety.

The 12 Golden Rules of Web Safety

1. Keep it to yourself. Don't share information about yourself on the Internet.
2. Once you put something on the Internet you can never get it back.
3. Don't give out your full name, address, telephone number, or the name of your school on the Internet.
4. Use Usernames/Screen names that aren't rude or offensive when you are chatting on-line, they only attract the wrong type of people
5. Always respect other people's feeling on the Internet.
6. Be aware that not everyone you meet on the Internet is who they pretend to be.
7. Never meet people face-to-face that you first met on the Internet without having one of your parents/guardians with you.
8. If you receive a message that bothers you, tell an adult. Block the sender and report them.
9. Only give your private e-mail address to someone you know in real life.
10. Be careful of e-mails that are too good to be true, offering you things for free or that ask to be forwarded to all your friends.
11. Don't open e-mails that you receive from people you don't know.
12. Never reply to any message you receive over the Internet that makes you feel uncomfortable.

Student's Name: _____

At Home: Discuss with your parents/guardians which will be the Top-Three Rules for safer Internet use at home.

Fill in and sign the Family Top-Three Contract and place it beside the computer at home.

Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____



Shountrade National School

Appendix 3.1

Our Family's Internet Safety Contract

We are a Family!

Our Family's Top-Three Internet Safety Rules

We want to use the Internet safely in our house and have agreed to follow these rules to help us all stay safe on the Internet

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Signed by:

Child: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Date: _____