S.N. An Fhaithche Anti-Bullying Policy

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of S.N. an Fhaithche 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 and was ratified by the Board in January 2024.

1. **Full Compliance**
   In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of S.N. an Fhaithche 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 AntiBullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013.

2. **Key Principles of Best Practice**
   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;
   - 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.

   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)

      i. On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

      j. The Principal will keep a register of all bullying allegations

      k. The principal will report to the Board of Management the number of bullying allegations each term

3. The Definition of Bullying

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and PostPrimary 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, extortion, isolation and persistent name calling,
- cyber bullying
- 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 our school's code of behaviour.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

4. Who Is Responsible For Doing What?

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

- The relevant class teacher and / or the relevant teacher on yard duty
- School Principal
- Deputy Principal

Those Responsible For Implementing This Policy:

- **All Teaching Staff, with the support of SNAs**
  All Teaching Staff, with the support of SNAs, will investigate and record incidents of bullying behaviour.

5. Our Procedures Re Bullying Behaviour

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:

a. Since the failure to report bullying can lead to a continuation or a deterioration of bullying, the school and parents encourage children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour. This can be with the class teacher, the teacher on yard duty at the time, Special Needs Assistants, and the principal or with parents. Special Needs Assistants are to report any instances of bullying behavior witnessed or reported to them to the relevant class teacher.This is a "telling school" as defined in the Stay Safe Programme. Children will therefore be constantly assured that their reports of bullying either for themselves or peers will be treated with sensitivity.

b. An allegation of bullying behaviour will be noted and recorded by the class teacher or the teacher on duty/yard duty.

c. The allegation will be investigated by the class teacher – what, who, when, where, why

d. An effort will be made to resolve any issues and to restore as far as practicable, the relationships.

e. The teacher will exercise professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and as to how it can be resolved.

f. Parents and pupils are required to cooperate with any investigation.

g. Serious incidents, or a pattern of bullying behaviour which has in the opinion of a teacher not been adequately or appropriately addressed **within 20 school** days will be recorded on the DES template and shall be reported to the principal / deputy principal. The teacher will also use the DES recording template where he/she considers the bullying behaviour to constitute serious misconduct.

h. The principal / deputy principal will then speak with the class. This is used as a part of the investigation process.

i. If a group is involved, they will be met both individually and as a group. Each member will be asked to write down his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said. For any children unable to write, access to a scribe will be provided or they will be asked to draw pictures/diagrams to help explain any incidents that may have occured.

j. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way, and will be expected to assist the investigation. Children should understand there are no innocent bystanders where bullying behaviour is concerned.

k. Those who are alleged to have partaken in bullying behavior will be asked to reflect on his/her behaviour and its consequences for himself/herself and for the person who is the victim of this behaviour.

l. Parents will be made aware of this behaviour and requested to come and discuss it with the teacher/principal with a view to solving the problem.

m. The situation will continue to be monitored to ensure that the problem has been resolved. Actions taken will be recorded in a template for recording anti- bullying behaviour. Records will be reviewed and analysed.

n. The code of behaviour will be invoked in circumstances where it is deemed prudent by the relevant teacher and school principal.

o. If a case remains unresolved the matter will be referred to the Chairperson of the Board of Management informally first and then to the school's Board of Management. The Board will also be briefed in relation to the number, if any, of templates which have been completed.

p. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures

q. In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

r. In the event that a member of staff has exhausted the school's complaints procedures in relation to a claim of bullying behavior, and is still not satisfied, the school must advise that staff member of their right to seek advice from The Teaching Council, I.N.T.O Fórsa or appropriate Trade Union as necessary.

6. The School's Programme of Support

The school's Programme of Support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

1. Regular reference to the Stay Safe Statements (Anti Bullying Statement). ...during class lessons and assemblies.

2. Circle time.

3. Mindfulness

 4. Friends for Life Programme

5. Our support teachers will facilitate self-esteem building between a teacher and the pupil if needed. Work with small groups will also be facilitated.

6. Through the means of curricular and extracurricular activities to develop positive self worth.

7. Developing pupil's awareness of identity-based bullying and in particular trans-phobic bullying, i.e. the "Growing Up" lesson in SPHE. Particular account will also be taken of the important role pupils with Special Educational Needs have to play.

7. Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying includes (but is not limited to) communicating via electronic means with the objective of causing hurt, fear, embarrassment, humiliation, alarm and/or distress to one or more persons.

Cyber bullying includes the use of mobile phones and the internet with the objective of upsetting someone.

It may take the form of general insults or impersonation, defamation or prejudice-based bullying.

Unlike other forms of bullying a once-off posting can constitute bullying.

While this policy addresses issues related to cyber bullying of students (i.e. situations in which one or more students are the victim[s] of bullying), the policy also applies to teaching and other school staff.

This policy applies to activities and events that take place:

- During school time (including break times)
- Going to and from school
- School tours/trips
- Extra-curricular activities

S.N. an Fhaithche reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school which spills over into the school.

Key Measures re Cyber Bullying

- A speaker from An Garda Siochána will be invited into classes from 3rd to 6th in the final term each year to inform the children about the dangers of reckless online activity and in particular about cyber bullying. (Relevant Garda Liaison Officer)
- The code of advice as outlined by WEBWISE will be communicated to help students protect themselves from being involved in bullying (as perpetrator or as victim) and to advise them on reporting any incidents.
- Students will be informed about cyber bullying in the course of their education at the school through the Stay Safe Programme.
- Lessons on cyber bullying on an age appropriate level will be taught by teachers (Stay Safe Programme)
- Parents will be provided with information and advice on cyber bullying annually.

- Parents and students are advised that the digital age of consent in Ireland is 13.
- Teachers will investigate, record and report all incidents of cyber bullying.
- S.N. an Fhaithche endeavours to block access to inappropriate web sites, using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems provided by the N.C.T.E and no pupil is allowed to work on the Internet without a member of staff present.
- Parents will have access to information seminars with regard to online safety provided by the National Parents Council organised by the Parents Association as they see fit.

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.

a. A supervision rota will be drawn up at the beginning of each year for the purpose of yard duty.
b. On wet days children will be supervised in their classrooms or in the General Purpose Room, once Covid regulations have been lifted.
c. One member of teaching staff and all Special Needs Assistants are on yard during breaktimes.
d. All staff are made aware of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting instances of bullying behavior.

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. Date This Policy Was Adopted

This policy was updated by staff and the Board of Management between in January 2024.

11. Availability of This Policy

This policy has been made available to school personnel and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. Review of This Policy

This Policy was reviewed as a direct result of the impact of Covid 19 on the school population, community and culture. All DES and HSE Covid regulations are being adhered to as specified in the Return to Work Policy, August 2020. As outlined in our Digital Learning Contingency Plan, should remote or blended learning become part of our Teaching and Learning again, there are certain safety regulations which we will share with parents. Parents will be expected to supervise and be present if and when teachers or SNAs are working live online with pupils. Parents will also be expected to ensure that pupils engage with online learning. The teachers have engaged in training and upskilled themselves in relation to online teaching and learning and all pupils have had many lessons in the use of the online Platform Seesaw which is used a few nights a week for homework thus ensuring continuity of engagement with online learning. The attention of parents and Guardians is also directed regularly to our policy on Cyber Bullying (as outlined above) and are requested to support us in our endeavours to keep our pupils safe online. The online platform we are using, Seesaw, has been set up in as safe a manner as possible, with pupils denied access to each other's work or recordings.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year during the month of January. The next review will take place in January 2025.

Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel 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: _____   Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date: _____   Date: _____

Building a positive school culture and climate in S.N. An Fhaithche

The following are actions that we have 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 – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.

- 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 playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.

- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school.
  - o Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
  - o Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when

pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.

🔸 Support the establishment and work of student councils.

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))*		**4. Location** of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*	
Pupil concerned		Playground	
Other Pupil		Classroom	
Parent		Corridor	
Teacher		Toilets	
Other		School Bus	
		Other	

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

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

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	

Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9.   Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)   Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

* Note: The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.

Appendix 2 Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

Yes /No

Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?	
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 _____   Date _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____   Date _____

Principal

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

To: _____

The Board of Management of _____ wishes to inform you that:

o   The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of _____ [date].

o   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 _____   Date _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____   Date _____

Principal