Scoil Maelruain Junior
Old Bawn Ave,
Tallaght
Dublin 24
D24T854
01 4513967
Roll Number: 19462T
www.scoilmaelruainjunior.org

Date	October 2022
Initial Draft	May 2014
Ratified by the Board of Management	May 2014 Redraft September 2023
Reviewed by the Board of Management	Redraft yet to be ratified*

This is a working continuous document

Draft Anti-Bullying Policy

Section 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 Maelruain Junior 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.

Section 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**
   a. is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
   b. encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
   c. promotes respectful relationships across the school community
B. **Key elements**

a. Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times
b. Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
c. Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
d. Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
e. Use of the Code of Behaviour - Rainbow Chart to encourage good behaviour such as kindness, respect and inclusivity of others.
f. Use of activities on yard to encourage positive behaviour and play practices;
g. Use of **Care Team** - The Care Team is made up of staff members and teachers submit a 'case' for review. The Team discusses cases to be reviewed and will prioritise them. They will meet once every six weeks and put Behaviour Plans in place. Teachers will meet with parents to discuss the plan and work with them to implement it. If the Behaviour Plan does not work, steps outlined in the Code of Behaviour are implemented.
h. 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.
i. Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns about potential dangers of Internet Usage.
j. Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
k. Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.

C. **Effective leadership**
D. **A school-wide approach**
E. **A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact**
F. **Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that**
   a. build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
   b. explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying;
   c. effective supervision and monitoring of pupils (See Appendix 1);
G. **Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**
H. **Supports for staff**
I. **Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and**
J. **On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy**
   a. 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:

   b. deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
   c. cyber-bullying and
   d. 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 an **internet site, social network site** or **other public forum** where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

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

Section 3:

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

- All class teachers
- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Care Team

Any teacher or member of staff may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

Section 4: 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.
- Scoil Maelruain Junior will celebrate difference and diversity amongst pupils by having an annual day of 'Recognition of Difference' where difference is celebrated. Teachers will use Unit 1- Myself and the World, Walk Tall Junior Infants, Unit 3 - Belonging Walk Tall Senior Infants, Unit 5 - Myself and the Wider World Walk Tall 1st Class and Unit 5 - Being Good Citizens Walk Tall 2nd Class from the Walk Tall SPHE programme to promote the importance of difference and diversity. It will be made clear that highlighting diversity as a negative is unacceptable in our school.
- The SPHE programmes of Walk Tall, RSE and Stay Safe will be used to foster and enhance self-esteem, self-confidence and resilience to provide pupils with the opportunity to develop a positive sense of self-worth.
- The SPHE programmes of Walk Tall, RSE and in particular Stay Safe will be used to educate children on the different types of bullying and how to deal with it.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying and the building of an ethos and culture of wellbeing to ensure that interventions are put in place to prevent bullying where possible.
- The School will work with the Parents Association to provide information and guidance around bullying to help parents recognise bullying behaviours in order to provide interventions to prevent bullying occurring.
- The School will provide supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities, see 'Supervision Policy'.

- Involvement of the Buddy system and in contributing to a safe school environment that can help to support children and encourage a culture of peer respect and support. This will be revisited as yard times are different for 2nd class children and Infant children.
- Through the implementation of the Stay Safe Programme Topic 2 'Friendship and Bullying' the children in Infants will become aware of what bullying is, what can we do to stop bullying and to use the strategy of 'Say no, get away and tell' and the children in 1st & 2nd classes will become aware of what is bullying, exclusion as a form of bullying, the effects of bullying and draw up a class agreement of behaviours they will or will not do to ensure that bullying does not take place.
- Parents will be made aware of when the Stay Safe programme is being taught and will be encouraged to speak with their children on each topic including the 'Friendship and Bullying'.
- Parents will be asked to read and agree to both the 'Code of Behaviour' and 'Anti-Bullying Policy' in advance of enrolment to the school. They will be made aware of the annual review of each policy and will be encouraged to view the policies on the website.
- 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:
    - Direct approach to the teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
    - Hand note up with homework.
    - 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 SSE Teacher Committee will develop a simple song/poem/rap that will help children remember how they can tell teachers or a trusted adult that they feel someone has been unkind to them.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. This protocol is explained at induction meetings for new pupils before they start school. It is incumbent on parents to report any alleged incident of bullying at the outset.
- Acceptable Use Policy in the school includes the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.

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 bullying from Stay Safe Programme and The Walk Tall Programme
- Delivery of lessons on:
    - **Relational aggression:** Walk Tall Unit 2 - Belonging and Cooperation Junior Infants, Walk Tall Unit 3 Belonging Senior Infants, Walk Tall Unit 4 - Keeping Safe, Unit 5 - Myself and Others 1st Class and Walk Tall Unit 4 - Standing Tall & Unit 5 - Being Good Citizens 2nd Class
    - **Cyber Bullying:** Use of resources from Web Wise - https://www.webwise.ie/teachers/resources/ Walk Tall Unit 5, lesson 6 - My favourite programmes Senior Infants, Walk Tall Unit 6 Media 1st Class and Walk Tall Unit 6 - Adverting 2nd Class, to promote safe internet use.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- Scoil Maelruain Junior recognises the vulnerability of children with additional needs. The school promotes a positive culture around difference and diversity to ensure that they are celebrated.
- The school equally recognises that there are times when children with additional needs may be involved in bullying behaviour. As with all children this will not be tolerated and these behaviours will be dealt with in accordance with this policy and the Code of Behaviour.

Links to other policies
- This policy has been developed keeping in mind our Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment Policy, Supervision of Pupils Policy, SPHE and RSE Policies and Acceptable Use Policy for Digital Technology

Section 5:
Procedures for Investigating Bullying and Dealing with Bullying:

The primary aim will be to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame). Due to the ages of the children in attendance of Scoil Maelruain Junior, both the children who are being bullied and those bullying will need support. This support will come from class teachers, Support Education Teachers and parents.

The class teacher has the primary role in investigating bullying behaviour. However, dependent on the seriousness of the actions involved, the class teacher may decide to involve the Deputy Principal / Principal.

Where there is more than one child involved in the bullying behaviours class teachers may seek the assistance of the Principal or Deputy Principal in investigating the allegations.

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), caretaker, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
- If a teacher suspects a child of bullying behaviours he/she will make a written record of any incidents that he/she witnesses as part of his/her report of a bullying incident.
- Any and all allegations of bullying will be investigated.

Investigating with Bullying Behaviours:
- Any allegations that may not be found to be bullying but rather a once off incident will be dealt with in accordance with our 'Code of Behaviour Policy'.
- 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. Teachers may consult with the Deputy Principal/Principal in determining this.
- The teacher will record all findings from a bullying investigation in writing.
- Parents and pupils are 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 as quickly as possible.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner. The teacher may use language that the children are familiar with from the Stay Safe SPHE Programme. This will be conducted in an age appropriate way.
- Incidents will generally be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after an interview by the teacher.
- Where appropriate, those involved will be asked to write down their account of the incident(s) See Appendix 2.
- Parents will be informed if their child is part of a bullying investigation both as the child being bullied or the child accused of bullying.

Dealing with Bullying Behaviours:
- In cases where it has been determined by the class teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the Principal will be informed of the details of the investigation.
- The Class Teacher/Principal will inform both the parents of the child that is being bullied and the child that is bullying that an investigation has been carried out and an incident of bullying has been found.
- The child who is bullied will be spoken to individually and in an age appropriate way:
  - He/she will be praised for reporting the bullying behaviours;
  - He/she will be assured that these behaviours will not continue and that they should report any if they do continue
  - That school is a safe space and if he/she feels unsafe he/she should report it to the classroom teacher or a trusted adult such as a parent of those on their 'Tell 5' list - Stay Safe Junior and Senior Infants Topic 1 - lesson 3, worksheet 4, page 34. This list will be revisited each year.
  - That the child who was engaging in the bullying behaviours will be dealt with and that this will not affect them.
- The child who bullied will be spoken to individually in an age appropriate way, using what, where, when, who and why questions:
  - The child will be asked to outline the bullying behaviours that they engaged in;
  - They will be asked to reflect on those behaviours and how they may have affected the child being bullied;
  - The child being bullied will be reminded of the school's Golden Rules especially Rule 2 - 'Kind hands, kind feet, kind words';
  - The child will be reminded that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated in the school;
  - They will be asked to think of ways in which they can repair the relationship with their peer;
- Class teacher/Support Education Teacher will seek support to repair the relationships that have been broken down by using 'Walk Tall' and Stay Safe SPHE Programmes to support those being bullied and those who are bullying.
- The incident may be brought to the 'Care Team' for advice and consultation.
- If the bullying behaviours continue the parent and the child will be asked to a meeting with the Principal to discuss the incidents together and a plan specific 'Behaviour Plan' will be put in place to address the behaviours.
- If the bullying continues beyond this meeting sanctioned outlined in Scoil Maelruain Junior's **Code of Behaviour** - Section: **Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with serious misbehaviours**
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
  - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
  - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
  - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and

- 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. (see Appendix 4). If, having exhausted these procedures, the parent is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
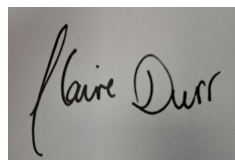
Section 6
Procedures for Recording Bullying Behaviour
All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour is as follows:
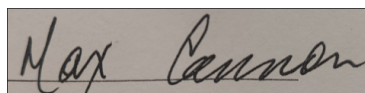
- The class teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of all reports of bullying, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding the same. If it is established by the class teacher that bullying has occurred, he/she will keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- The template form (see Appendix 3) will serve as a summary of the investigation. Where appropriate, additional notes and details will be attached to the form to retain on file, particularly in cases where the bullying was not resolved within 20 days of the initial investigation. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in this recording template does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.
- In cases where the teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred, the relevant teacher will pass a copy of the recording template to the Principal.

This policy was ratified on: May 2014 and reviewed and ratified annually

*Current version is a complete revision of the policy and is in draft form. It will be ratified in the second term of 23/24 to allow for staff to use it and make appropriate changes if necessary. The Board of Management has sanctioned this.

Claire Durr   Max Cannon

Principal   Chairperson

This draft policy will be available on the school website and through the office.

Appendix 1:

<u>Anti-bullying Focus Groups (2013)</u>

A group of 14 children, two from each of the First and Second Classes, were taken as a focus group to give feedback regarding their experiences and opinions of identity-based and cyber bullying ahead of the school's drafting of a new anti-bullying policy. Identity-based bullying, in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying, and cyber bullying had been highlighted in the recent guidelines issued by the Department of Education as areas which needed to be addressed in schools' approaches to bullying. It was felt that some of these forms of bullying might not be very relevant to children in a Junior National School so the focus group was set up to inform staff of young children's understanding, or lack of understanding, of these types of bullying.

The children were taken by Mr. Callan and Ms. Ní Chléirigh, working in two separate groups. Each teacher taught lessons and had Circle Time type discussions with the children, loosely based on the Bullying section of the Stay Safe programme.

The children's understanding of what constituted bullying was first assessed by asking them to define it. The key points raised by the children were:
- Bullying is usually a repeated act of aggression or "being mean".
- Bullying isn't something you do without thinking, like hitting someone when you lose your temper, it's something the bully sets out to do.
- Bullying doesn't have to involve hitting or pushing, it can be name calling, not letting someone join in a game, telling lies about somebody, giving somebody "looks".

The children's understanding of what to do in case of bullying was assessed, again through informal Circle Time discussion. The children's answers again followed what they had been taught through Stay Safe.
- Tell the bully you don't like their behaviour and that if it doesn't stop tell them you will tell the teacher.
- Use a firm, strong voice, try to look brave.
- If you can't feel brave, it's ok, none of it is your fault anyway.
- If you see bullying, tell the bully to stop, support the person being bullied, encourage them to tell, help them to tell.

<u>Cyber Bullying:</u>
The teachers explored cyber bullying with the children, describing it as being similar to people passing mean notes or whispering mean things, but with technology. The children were well able to give examples of types of technology (phones, smartphones, computers, tablets) and they certainly do use them, but from discussions with the children it was very clear that they didn't use them to contact other children. For example, none of the children had phones, but some said they would be getting them "after the Communion". When asked why they needed one they said it was because they would be allowed walk home from school then. It appeared that children in this age-group had little contact with other children through technology, nor had they much, if any, experience of social media. However, from discussions with the children and other teachers it does appear that a number of children have unsupervised access to devices with internet connectivity, which is an area of concern. **(NB: Since the focus groups concluded, Mr. Callan has heard children talking about "adding each other" on a game called FIFA 14. It seems that they are playing an internet-based multiplayer game in which they can add friends and send messages to each other. This could have the potential to be used for bullying in the same way that social media are.)**

<u>Identity-based Bullying:</u>
The teachers explored identity-based bullying with the children, describing it as being bullied "for being just the way you are". When asked for examples of what this could mean the children responded with the following:
- A girl who isn't a girly girl, one who plays with boys and likes football.

- A boy who plays with dolls and girls.
- A boy who has long hair and is a bit girly.
- A child who has a hearing aid.
- A child in a wheelchair.
- A child with something wrong with their legs or a funny walk.
- Someone who is really short.
- Someone who's babyish.
- Someone with a different voice (when pressed, the child's explanation indicated they meant a stammer or speech impediment, rather than an accent).
- Someone with braces.

Interestingly, the first three examples the children thought up can be seen as being a seven or eight year old's definition of homophobic bullying, or at least bullying on the grounds of someone not meeting preconceived gender expectations. Another point of interest was that no child mentioned ethnicity or country of origin as a form of "difference".

Following these discussions, the teachers asked the children for their opinions on the matter of difference. The children offered the following opinions:
- It's okay to be different.
- Someone being different has no effect on you and is none of your business.
- Being different can actually be cool.
- If someone is looking like they are being left out you should offer to include them in your play.
- If they don't want to join in, that's ok too.

The conclusion of the focus groups involved the children making anti-bullying posters, focusing specifically on identity-based bullying (explained again to the children as "being bullied just for being who you are") and preparing a presentation for the other classes.

<u>Conclusions:</u>
The focus groups were definitely a worthwhile exercise as they resulted in child-led exploration of the subject of bullying as a whole and child-friendly and age-appropriate definitions of the new areas to be included in the anti-bullying policy, namely identity-based (such as homophobic) and cyber-bullying. This exercise could easily be repeated on a whole class basis, perhaps as part of an annual Anti-Bullying Week, with First Second Classes engaging in the lessons and providing feedback and presentations to younger classes. While cyberbullying and interaction on social media and phones seem to be less of an area of concern for children of this age group, unsupervised access to internet devices is worrying. Lessons on cyber-bullying in junior school could focus more on internet safety and the concept of strangers on the internet. If a teacher felt knowledgeable enough on the subject, the school could offer an information evening for parents to inform them of ways to keep their children safe around technology. Please refer to our '*Acceptable Usage Policy for Digital Learning'.*

Appendix 2:

This can be used for teachers to use during an investigation or for a child to record/report a behaviour to teacher.

Appendix 3:

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	

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

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
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 or attach documents to support

9. Details of actions taken attach documents to support

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)   Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Appendix 4:

https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/parental-complaints/#making-a-complaint

Making a Complaint:
If you are worried about your child at school or you have a complaint about the school, your child's class teacher is the best person to approach first for an informal discussion. If your complaint is about a staff member (excluding the principal), you should contact the principal. Complaints about the principal should be directed to the Board of Management.

Contacting Your Child's Teacher or School Principal:
All contacts with school staff is made through the Aladdin Connect App or via email to scoilmaelruainjunior@gmail.com.

If you are unhappy with the Response:
If the teacher can not help or you are unhappy with the response you can make contact with the school principal via the Aladdin Connect App or via email to scoilmaelruainjunior@gmail.com to request a phone call or face to face meeting.

If you are unhappy with the response that the principal has given you, you can advance the complaint to the Board of Management through the steps outlined in the link below:

https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/38514/878de0051fed40b39892c85b92f0de24.pdf#page=1