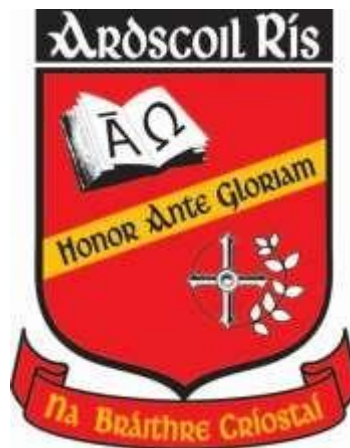


# Anti-Bullying Policy



Ardscoil Rís  
Edmund Rice Schools Trust School North  
Circular Road  
Limerick

Ardscoil Rís is a Catholic School under the  
Trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust

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# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 School Profile**

Ardscoil Rís is an all-boys post-primary school under ERST patronage serving Limerick City and County and South Clare. The school currently has 740 pupils and over 50 staff including an administrative Principal and two Deputy Principals, two Guidance Counsellors, one Learning Support teacher, two Administrative Staff, one Accounts Secretary, two Caretaker and four Special Needs Assistants. There is strong parental support for teaching and learning. The school offers a wide range of subjects. Ardscoil Rís recognises the necessity to cater for the needs of every student in broad holistic terms throughout the five/six years he spends with us.

## **1.2 Mission Statement**

Ardscoil Rís aims to promote the spiritual, personal, physical, cultural, aesthetic and academic development of its students. It aims to create a community where students are imbued with Christian values of respect, justice and integrity. It encourages students to become involved in a variety of extra-curricular activities to ensure that all students achieve their true full potential.

## **1.3 Ethos**

Inspired by the vision of Edmund Rice, Ardscoil Rís subscribes to the holistic vision of education expressed in the following five key elements of the ERST Charter:

- Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values;
- Promoting partnership;
- Excelling in teaching and learning;
- Creating a caring school community;
- Inspiring transformational leadership.

The pursuit of excellence is a core objective and the school seeks to maximise the development of each student's capabilities in academic and co-curricular areas. While learning is central to all we do, the classroom is only one component of a complex learning culture. In the classroom, active participation as opposed to passive reception is welcomed and encouraged.

#### **1.4 Rationale**

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 **Ardcoil Rís** 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 which were published in September 2013. 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 positive school culture and climate which
  - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
  - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment;
  - and promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- ❖ Effective leadership;
- ❖ A school-wide approach;
- ❖ A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- ❖ 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;
- ❖ Supports for staff;
- ❖ Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- ❖ On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

## 1.5 Links to other policies

This document should be read in conjunction with all other school policies including

- ❖ Admission and Enrolment Policy
- ❖ Acceptable Use Policy
- ❖ Anti-Bullying Policy
- ❖ Child Protection Guidelines
- ❖ Code of Behaviour Policy
- ❖ Critical Incident Policy
- ❖ Health and Safety Policy
- ❖ Homework Policy
- ❖ Pastoral Care Policy
- ❖ School Tour Policy
- ❖ Special Education Needs Policy
- ❖ Substance Use Prevention Policy
- ❖ Social, Personal, and Health Education / Relationship and Sexuality Policy
- ❖ Religious Education Policy

## 2.1 What is 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.”*

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.

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

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

First Year:	Year Head
Second Year:	Year Head
Third Year:	Year Head
Fourth Year:	Year Head
Fifth Year:	Year Head
Sixth Year:	Year Head

\*Principal or Deputy Principal may act as the relevant teacher if the circumstance warrants it.

\*Guidance Counsellor

\*Any teacher may act as the relevant teacher if the circumstance warrants it.

**2.3 The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyberbullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:**

Students are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying situations and so become more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take.

Students 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.

Students are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour.

The following is also in place:

- ❖ Frequent contact with individual students by the Principal, Deputy-Principal, Class Tutors and Year Heads to establish good personal relationships
- ❖ Anti-bullying charter on display in all classrooms
- ❖ The anti-bullying modules in the SPHE programme as it applies (RSE)
- ❖ The anti-bullying modules in CSPE as it applies
- ❖ The anti-bullying modules in RE as it applies (RSE)
- ❖ Mental health module in Transition Year as it applies.
- ❖ The internet safety workshop by the ERI leaders
- ❖ The anti-bully drama/workshop for all first years
- ❖ Awareness raising campaigns eg. The Odd Socks Day
- ❖ Displaying the Anti-bullying Charter prominently throughout the school
- ❖ Gender Based Violence Workshop
- ❖ Drop all read and discuss Code of Behaviour
- ❖ Drop all read and discuss Anti-Bullying Policy - Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate
- ❖ Assemblies for year groups
- ❖ Multicultural week
- ❖ Mentoring programme for first year students
- ❖ Lunch time clubs for junior and senior students where possible
- ❖ ERI Peace and Justice Group
- ❖ Personal Safety Workshops
- ❖ One to one counselling
- ❖ Retreats
- ❖ Dignity in the work place policy
- ❖ Teachers' presence on the yard and the corridors at break and lunch time. Such supervision can act as a deterrent of bullying activity
- ❖ The Pastoral Care Committee endeavours to identify students who may benefit from additional support and guidance and meets with these students

- ❖ The school Guidance Counsellors arranges individual meetings with all first year students. These meetings may assist in the prevention of bullying
- ❖ All school staff, students, Student Council, Parent Council and Board of Management will be made aware of this Anti-bullying Policy
- ❖ The Student Council is encouraged to play an active leadership role in the prevention of bullying.
- ❖ Frequent contact with individual students by the Principal, Deputy-Principal, Class Tutors and Year Heads to establish good personal relationships

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 the signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the school's relevant teacher/teacher/pastoral care team.

The school community is regularly informed of the anti-bullying activities of the school and encouraged to support such work.

**2.4 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:**

**Stage 1:**

**Noting and Reporting**

- ❖ All incidents or suspicions of bullying should be brought to the attention of the Yearhead, Class Tutor, Principal, Deputy-Principal, subject teacher or Guidance Counsellor.
- ❖ Any such incidents will be reported to the Principal, Deputy-Principal and Year-Head for investigation.
- ❖ A written record of the incident will be filed. Such reports should be fact-based without opinion or conjecture (see appendix 1)
- ❖ Confidentiality will be observed. However, a duty of care obligation exists where others may need to be contacted. (Following child protection guidelines)
- ❖ Ancillary staff will be aware of the policy and will be encouraged to report any incidents which raise concern.



## **Stage 2:**

### **Investigating and Dealing with an incident of bullying**

- ❖ In an incident of alleged bullying the victim, perpetrator and witness will be interviewed as appropriate.
- ❖ All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all the students involved
- ❖ A written record of any interviews will be filed
- ❖ In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred it may be appropriate to meet with the parents/guardians of the two parties involved to explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, and to refer them to school policy
- ❖ Depending on the outcome of these procedures pastoral strategies and/or disciplinary sanctions may be invoke

Where a student 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:

#### Sanctions may include:

- a) Dialogue with students involved
- b) Issuing a complaint slip
- c) Detention
- d) A formal warning
- e) A contract of good behaviour
- f) Withdrawal of privileges
- g) School community service
- h) Suspension
- i) Exclusion
- j) Others deemed appropriate

## **2.5 The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:**

1. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

For bullied students (as required under Procedures 5.2.2 (vii) and Appendix 1. 7.):

- ❖ Ending the bullying behaviour,
- ❖ Changing the school culture through ongoing awareness-raising to
  - foster more respect for bullied pupils and for all pupils and
  - foster greater empathy towards, and support for bullied pupils,
- ❖ Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil (a reassurance bullied pupils often need), through ongoing awareness-raising and through the speedy identification of those involved in bullying and speedy resolution of bullying situations and, after resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a victim-impact statement,
- ❖ Making adequate support and/or counselling facilities available to pupils who need them (who seem less resilient and are slower to recover, to make friends and to enjoy school life again), within or outside the school as applicable, 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.
- ❖ Implement the "buddy system" in the school where applicable.

For bullying students:

- ❖ 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,
- ❖ Seeking other ways to "catch them doing the right thing" and giving appropriate praise,
- ❖ Supporting them to overcome learning difficulties through Support Staff provision and to overcome emotional and/or social difficulties through class management and pastoral care within the school,
- ❖ Helping those whose self-esteem is low 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 during or after school),

- ❖ Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth, including creating opportunities to use appropriate praise,
- ❖ In dealing with negative behaviour 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.
- ❖ Making adequate support and/or counselling facilities available to help remedy underlying issues for those who need them, within or outside the school as applicable, and to help them learn to meet their needs without violating the rights of others.

## **2.6 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.

## **2.7 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.

## **2.8 Oversight**

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website

is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Association). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school 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: 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Date of next review: 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023

### 3.1 Appendix 1 Examples of bullying behaviour

**Bullying can take a number of forms. These may include any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):**

- Repeated aggressive behaviour/attitude/body language, for example:
  - Shouting and uncontrolled anger
  - Personal insults
  - Verbal abuse
  - Offensive language directed at an individual
  - Continually shouting or dismissing others
  - Public verbal attacks/criticism
  - Domineering behaviour
  - Open aggression
  - Offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact
- **Intimidation, either physical, psychological or emotional, for example:**
  - Treating in a dictatorial manner,
  - Ridicule
  - Persistent slagging
  - Deliberate staring with the intent to discomfort
  - Persistent rudeness in behaviour and attitude toward a particular individual
  - Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. personal life/family
  - Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. social life or schoolwork
- **Interference with property, for example:**
  - Stealing/damaging books or equipment
  - Stealing/damaging clothing or other property

Demanding money with menaces

Persistently moving, hiding or interfering with property

Marking/defacing property

- **Undermining/Public or Private Humiliation, for example:**

Condescending tone

Deliberately withholding significant information and resources

Writing of anonymous notes

Malicious, disparaging or demeaning comments

Malicious tricks/derogatory jokes

Knowingly spreading rumours

Belittling others efforts, their enthusiasm or their new ideas

Derogatory or offensive nicknames (name-calling)

Negative remarks regarding gender, sexual identity or orientation

Using electronic or other media for any of the above (cyber bullying)

Disrespectfully mimicking a particular individual in his/her absence,

Deliberately refusing to address issues focusing instead on the person

- **Ostracising or isolating, for example:**

Deliberately marginalising an individual

Deliberately preventing a person from joining a group

Deliberately preventing a person from joining in an activity, schoolwork-related or recreational

Blaming a pupil for things s/he did not do

### 3.2 Appendix 1 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken by Ardscoil Rís 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.
  - Hot spots tend to be in school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
  - Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the school yard or moving classrooms.

- ❖ Support the establishment and work of student councils.



**3.3 Appendix 2 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

4. Location of incident

Pupil concerned		Yard	
Other Pupil Classroom		Classroom	
Parent		Toilets	
Teacher		Bus	
Other School Bus		Corridor	
Other (specify)		Other(specify)	

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

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

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying/online	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling Other (specify)		Other (specify)	

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN	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.

### 3.4 Appendix 3 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.

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?	Yes
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	Yes
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?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	Yes
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	Yes
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	Yes
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	No
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	Yes
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	Yes
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?	No
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	Yes
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	No
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	No
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?	No
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	No
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	No

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022

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

Date 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022

### 3.5 Appendix 4 Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: \_\_\_\_\_

The Board of Management of Ardscoil Rís wishes to inform you that:

- ❖ The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022.
- ❖ 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 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Principal