	Anti-Bullying Scoil Mhuire Fatima, An Mhainistir Thuaidh.	

Our Rationale:
In Scoil Mhuire Fatima we acknowledge and support the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a happy, safe and welcoming environment.

Introduction:

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 Mhuire Fatima, An Mhainistir Thuaidh, 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.

Principals of Best Practice:

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 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.**Definition Of Bullying:**

3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- **deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,**
- **cyber-bullying and**
- **identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.**

Isolated or **once-off** incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a **once-off** offensive or hurtful text message or other **private messaging**, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum <u>where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people</u> 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*. –physical aggression, intimidation, isolation, exclusion, malicious gossip or rumours, non-verbal gesturing, giving the " silent treatment", name calling/mocking, damage to property, extortion

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4. Investigating Bullying:

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

Class Teachers

Support Teachers- Special Education Teacher/ Home-School Liaison Coordinator

Principal/ Deputy Principal

Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection-Principal and Deputy Principal

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5. Education and Prevention Strategies:

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that may be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

- **September** -Each class may devise a set of **Classroom Rules** at the beginning of the school year in September which will promote inclusion, acceptance of difference, tolerence and respect for one another. **A specific Anti- Bullying Rule will be included in each set of Classroom Rules on public display in each class.**

- Class based/school based fun activities which promote co-operation, sharing, friendship. Circle time/class discussions on friendship -making friends, maintaining friendships, resolving conflicts, responsibilities towards one another etc.

- Anti-Bullying: Specific lessons will be taught from the Stay Safe Programme/ /SPHE Programme/Alive O Programme/ and from suitable websites e.g.Beat The Bully www.antibullyingireland.ie etc. to support both education and prevention strategies. Competitions will be held on the theme using art, poetry and drama and will be on display in each corridor.

- **Lessons on Cyberbullying** and appropriate use of technology such as **" Netiquette"** or a suitable alternative will be taught from 3rd to 6th class using resources such as Get With It! A Guide to Cyberbullying www.internetsafety.ie ; www.webwise.ie ; www.childnet.com ; Safety Tips on Cyberbullying and Internet Safety Tips for Families Advice Sheets will be circulated to all pupils from 3rd to 6th class. (**Appendix 6**)

- The whole school community will be encouraged to become a **"reporting school"** whereby members of the school community are encouraged to report if they are being bullied or if they witness a bullying situation.

- Where the opportunity arises, **facilitated workshops by an outside agency** including reference to identity-based, homophobic and transphobic bullying will be provided to classes from 4th to 6th.

- Constructive feedback will be given to pupils when **respectful behaviour** and **respectful language** are absent. All staff will 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 S.E.N.

- **Discussion** of the underlying principles of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour will take place regularly at **staff meetings**.

- **Promotion of pupil self-esteem** through highlighting achievements, both academic and non-academic, inside and outside school, will take place throughout the school year. Celebration of pupil achievements will be publicised in class, at school assemblies, in the school newsletter and on the school website as appropriate.

6. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with 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 (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

1. The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying, is to resolve any issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);

2. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;

3. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in "telling". This confidence 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;

4. Non-teaching staff e.g. secretaries, special needs assistants (SNA's), cleaners, traffic wardens, School Completion Staff, Caretakers, visiting teachers/coaches, will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or reported to them to the relevant teacher;

5.Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;

6. It is very important that all involved, including each set of pupils and parents, understand the above approach from the outset;

7. Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents; Teachers investigating cases of bullying behaviour will keep a written record of their discussions with those involved. **It is school policy to inform the Principal of the situation and to request the assistance of another staff member in such investigations;**

8. Incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;

9. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide useful information in this way;

10. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of **what, where, when , who and why**. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;

11. If a gang is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, the gang should 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;

12. Each member of the group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group, after interview, by the relevant teacher;

13. It may be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s); this will be done at the teacher's discretion and taking pupil ages into account;

14. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the Principal will be informed. The parents of the parties involved will then be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken by reference to the school policy. The school will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils;

15.In the case of the pupil who has engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him how he is in breach of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and efforts will be made to get him to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;

16. Scoil Mhuire Fatima will utilise a restorative practice approach in its initial stage of resolving the situation. The perpetrator will be requested to give an undertaking that the offending behaviour will stop and will also apologise to the victim of the bullying behaviour in the presence of the Principal and the investigating teacher. A formal **Contract of Agreement** will be entered into by both parties and the parents of both parties will be informed. The contract will be monitored regularly by a nominated Support Teacher and the class teacher to see that the situation has resolved; This **Contract of Agreement** is therapeutically based and is used to assist the restoration of relationships between the parties;

17. If, after the above, the bullying behaviour re-occurs, a formal meeting of the perpetrator, his/her parent(s)/guardian(s), and the Principal will be held and a formal suspension in line with the school's Code of Behaviour may/will occur;

18. In cases where the school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) or a referral to relevant external agencies and authorities will be sought;

19. In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days, after he has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher using the recording template **Appendix 3;**

In doing so the teacher must take the following into account:

Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased/Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as practicable/Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as practicable/Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;

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

21. 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.

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7. Procedures for Recording Bullying Behaviour:

It is school policy that if it is established by the relevant teacher that **bullying has occurred**, the relevant teacher will keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved

The recording template **Appendix 3** will be completed in full and retained by the relevant teacher and a copy will be provided to the Principal to be held on record. Data from these reports will form the basis of the Principal's termly report to the Board of Management and will also provide analytical data in relation to the evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

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8. Supports for Pupils Affected by Bullying:

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

1 A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied will be provided by the school's Behaviour Support Teacher or by another designated teacher, in liaison with the class teacher. These pupils will be provided with counselling/and opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and build their resilience whenever this is needed.

2. Pupils engaged in bullying will also receive support to assist them in changing their behaviour. The formal **Contract of Agreement** between the parties will be monitored weekly by the school's Principal/Vice Principal or by another designated teacher, in liaison with the class teacher.

3. Focused workshop/discussion and support will be provided to classes where bullying has occurred by the school's Principal/Vice Principal or by another designated teacher, in liaison with the class teacher.

4. Anti Bullying Advice Sheets / Cyber Bullying Advice Sheets will be available to pupils and parents.

5. In the case of children for whom bullying is having a serious impact which cannot be dealt satisfactorily in school, consultation will be made with the National Education Psychological Service(NEPS) as to whether formal referral to an outside agency may be necessary to support the pupil concerned.

6. Any parent who considers that their child's mental health is being affected by bullying, should also be advised to contact their G.P for referral if necessary to the HSE's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service(CAHMS).

7. Support and advice for parents and their child may also be available through local professional accredited counsellors and psychotherapists, specialist organisations and support services. Many websites also provide information for parents to help their child in relation to bullying. Details of these services are contained in **Appendix 7.**

8. Staff will be facilitated by the Board of Management to update skills on a regular basis in relation to bullying and its impact on pupils, and where approved in advance by the Board, funding will be made available for resources, and for staff inservice or whole school training.

9. Referral of Serious Cases to the HSE/ Gardaí

In relation to bullying in schools, *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 (Children First)* and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* provide that in situations where "the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan."

Serious instances of bullying behaviour should, in accordance with the *Children First* and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, be referred to the HSE and/or the Gardaí as appropriate.

The *Child Protection for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Service

10. 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. Pupils are supervised at break-times in school and on arrival at and dismissal from school. Supervision is not provided by staff to pupils coming to and from school, however, pupils are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying to their parents/guardians and/or the relevant teacher.

11. 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, nationality, race and membership of the Traveller community.

12. Ongoing Evaluation and Oversight of Policy

The effectiveness of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy will be subject to continuous review in the light of bullying incidences encountered. The school will make provision for periodic examination of the prevention and intervention strategies in place. Surveys of pupils, staff and parents may be used to provide important information about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying measures in place and identify any behavioural trends that may benefit from early intervention.

The implementation and effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy will be regularly included as an item for discussion at staff meetings so as to ensure that concerns about the policy and/or the welfare of individual pupils can be shared and effectively addressed.

Data gathered from Bullying Reports completed by relevant teachers and copied to the Principal- **Appendix 3** will be collated and analysed once a year with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour and identifying any particular issues that require attention or any significant trends in behaviour. A record of this analysis will be retained and be made available to the Board of Management and appropriate responses to any issues identified will be drawn up and implemented.

13. This policy has been made available to school personnel, is published on the school website www.northmonprimary.net and is readily accessible and provided to parents and pupils on request from the school office and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

14. 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 website, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request,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.

Appendix 1 - Examples of Bullying Behaviours

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),
  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 from joining in an activity, schoolwork-related or recreational
  Blaming a pupil for things s/he did not do.

Appendix 2 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be 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.
  - Hot spots tend to be in the playground/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 playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

Appendix 3 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)

_____
_____
_____

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

9. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Appendix 4 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?	

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

What to Do
Act as confident 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 the person you talk to that you are afraid if they do anything it might make it worse, ask them to find a way to help you deal with it that won't.

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.

Appendix 6: TIPS FOR PARENTS.

What can I do?

There are some simple practical steps you can take to help limit the risks as well as clear advice you can give your child. The best way of doing this is to get involved and understand how your children use the internet. Developing your knowledge of the technology involved and understanding how your child uses this technology to interact with others on the Internet will greatly assist you in guiding and supporting your children to ensure that they are using it in the safest possible manner.

Where do I start?

The best place to start is by understanding the technology that is being used by your children when they are interacting on the internet. Many parents find this immensely daunting. It is not necessary to be completely proficient in Information Technology to do this, even a basic understanding of these technologies will give you the necessary knowledge to help identify the potential risks and to ensure that you and your children can enjoy the internet in the safest possible manner?

I'm not great with the technology,! OK, so what is ……?

Below is a list with very brief descriptions of some of the main types of technology being used by children today. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list, rather more of a beginners' guide.

app

An app (short for application) is a software program. An app typically refers to software used on smartphones, tablets or other mobile devices. The terms 'web app' or 'online app' are often used in business settings to describe software that you can use and access while on the internet. Apps are usually available through application distribution platforms typically operated by the owner of the mobile operating system, such as the Apple App Store,Google Play, Windows Phone Store and Blackberry App World. Some apps are free while others must be bought.

Messaging apps

Instant Messaging is a form of live and instantaneous communication, a mixture of chatrooms, email and phonecalls, facilitated by the internet connecting PCs, laptops, mobile phones and other hand held devices. It can take the form of private communication between known friends where users build up a list of their own contacts and are alerted when they are online, or it can also be a public open environment. Instant Messaging allows people to communicate via the web instantaneously using a variety of options including text, voice, video and pictures.

E-mail

E-mail stands for Electronic Mail and is a way of sending messages from one computer to another over the Internet. Messages are composed in special e-mail programmes.

Picture and Video-messaging

Picture and video messaging are increasingly popular forms of communications, as mobile phone devices become increasingly sophisticated. Essentially the devices allow users to forward pictures and videos in a similar manner to text messages.

Texting
Short Messaging Service (SMS) better known as texting, is the facility on your mobile phone handset which allows the user to write a text message and send this message to another number, where it will be received as a written message.

Social Networking Sites (SNS)
Social Networking areas are websites with applications which help connect friends using a number of tools like blogs, profiles, internal email systems and photos. Well known sites include Facebook (www.facebook.com), Instagram https://www.instagram.com/ and Twitter (www.twitter.com).

There are also a number of SNS targetting very young children, for example MovieStarPlanet, Moshi Monsters, KidzNet etc.
Many young people use these sites to create their own profiles, which they then link to those of their friends and so on. Once set up they can use these profiles to share photographs, create blogs and post comments on other peoples profiles and blogs.

Internet & Social Media Slang
The language has become a key feature of the culture on social networking websites. Some reasons are practical. It saves time. 'B4N' is quicker to type than 'Bye for Now'. Other reasons are less obvious but more important.
the language marks an identity that sets teenagers apart from parents and adults online.
It's a language common to peer-groups of teenagers: people of similar age, interests and outlook on life.
It sets a boundary between those who belong and those who don't.
Keep up to date with the most popular terms teens use online at webwise.ie.

Chat Apps
Because the Internet connects PCs, laptops and mobile devices it allows people to "chat". There are certain apps and websites which allow people to make calls, video calls and texts over the Internet.

Live Streaming
Many apps and scoial networks including Youtube, Instagram and Facebook allow users to record video and broadcast live directly from their smartphones. Using the built-in camera in a smartphone users can easily broadcast live footage via popular apps such as Youtube, Facebook and Instagram.

Surfing the Net
Most people who surf the net will do so by means of a browser, which allows you to look at internet sites. The most common browser used on PCs is Microsoft Internet Explorer. Other browsers include , Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox.

Search Engines
Search Engines are used to assist people when surfing the net. Among the more popular search engines are Google (www.google.ie), Bing (www.bing.com) and Yahoo (www.yahoo.com). Essentially, search engines have a search bar facility, which allows users to type in the specific information they seek. Once you do this and hit search, the search engine trawls trawls the web seeking pages that will have the information that you are seeking, and it then gives you a list of appropriate web addresses.

Games Consoles
Games Consoles are entertainment systems designed specifically to allow users to play games. Popular versions include Sony PlayStation, Nintendo Wii and Microsoft's Xbox.

Online Games
Online Gaming relates to the process whereby users can, through the internet interact with other online users in playing games. This allows users to play games against other individuals without the need for players to be in the same location. www.pegionline.eu is an excellent site which provides information on protecting children when they are participating in online gaming.

File Sharing
File Sharing programmes allow users to swap or share files from their PCs with others over the Internet. There are also some commercial peer-to-peer applications which allow users to buy music and video content over the Internet.

Weblogs
Weblogs, more commonly referred to as 'blogs' are usually intended for a public audience. A blog also allows for interaction with its readers through comments which can be made on the posting or other comments. Blogs differ from personal websites in that they are made up of a series of individual postings, usually published in chronological order. Generally only the manager(s) of the blog are authorised to post messages. Anyone with an internet connection can upload a comment to a posting. Access to blogs can be restricted if necessary, and comments can either be disabled or moderated by the manager of the blog. They are particularly popular with young people. Bloggers often address a narrow topic and a small, specialised audience.

OK, that's a lot to take in! So, what are the risks that I should be looking out for?

- As is always the case, with each of the different types of technologies there are both positives and negatives. There is a wide range of excellent sites such as www.webwise.ie/parents/ and www.thinkuknow.co.uk that provide more detailed information on the various positive and potentially negative aspects of the technology our children use on the internet today.
- Broadly speaking the key areas of concern that parents should be aware of are as follows.
- Anonymous Nature - Parents should be aware that by its nature the Internet allows users to retain their anonymity, particularly in the context of chatrooms and instant messaging. It's important that children are taught to understand that people they are in contact with may not be what they seem and that they should be very careful in terms of how they interact with others and what kind of information that they should disclose to others accordingly.
- Security Issues - Increasingly young people are placing large amounts of personal information on the internet, whether it's through profiles on social networking sites or disclosing information in conversations on chat apps. The disclosure of such

information may leave them a t risk of the information being used by others to perpetrate fraudulent actions in their names.

- Cyberbullying – parents should be aware of the potential risk of individuals using the various types of internet technology and/or materials from the internet for defamatory purposes.

- Ok, with so much potential danger out there, how can I protect my children from the risks?

- It is important to remember that there are many many positive aspects to the internet, and that the best way forward is to proactively engage with your children in their endeavours to ensure that they are able to maximise their enjoyment of the internet in the safest possible manner.

- Get Involved: Learn more about what your children are doing online. Become familiar with the systems they use, if you don't know how to use them ask them to show you or teach yourself how to use them.

- Talk to them: Explain to them the potential dangers that exist, encourage them to talk to you if they are having difficulties or experiencing problems with other users that they may be interacting with on the Internet.

- Set guidelines: Set Guidelines in relation to internet usage, when it can be used, for how long, what kind of information that they should be giving out, encouraging them to treat other users with the same level of respect that they want people to show them

- Use Available Resources: Many of the technologies that children use today have resources that can be used to help protect children from inappropriate or obscene content. Filtering , Blocking and Parental Control Systems are among some of the options available.

- Be Vigilant: Keep computers where you can see them, keep an eye on the sites that they are visiting to ensure their suitability

- Report! –Any instances of suspected online child abuse should be reported to www.hotline.ie immediately.

Appendix 7 – USEFUL WEBSITES
www.internetsafety.ie
Website of the Office for Internet Safety
www.webwise.ie
Provides parents, teachers and children with educational resources, advice and information about potential dangers on-line
www.watchyourspace.ie
Advice on managing children's profiles on social-networking sites
www.antibullyingireland.com

Website providing advice to children and parents on prevention of bullying

www.childline.ie

Child Safety Issues

www.hotline.ie

Irish hotline for public to report child pornography and other illegal content on the internet

www.barnardos.ie

Charity for the protection of children

www.ncte.ie

The National Centre for Technology in Education provides advice and support on technology in education

www.o2.ie/childprotection

Information on child protection services offered by O2

www.npc.ie

Website of the National Parents Council

www.nyci.ie

Website of National Youth Council of Ireland

www.iacp.ie

Provides lists of accredited counsellors and psychotherapists