

Ballycanew National School: ANTI - BULLYING POLICY

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 Ballycanew National School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.

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

See Appendix 1: Key elements of a positive school culture and climate

3. 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.

- * persistent mimicking and impersonating of peers

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 will 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.

Appendix 2: Examples of bullying behaviours.

4. The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying is the class teacher.

A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with our school's anti-bullying policy.

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

- * Build a positive school culture and climate- see **Appendix 3** attached
- * Consistently recognising and rewarding positive behavior
- * Fostering and enhancing the self-esteem of our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities.
- * Teaching the **Social, Personal, Health Education** curriculum (to include Walk Tall. Stay Safe, Human Rights Education, R.S.E programmes) in all classes is an effective resource which includes prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying and involves strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils and provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.
- * Awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parents/guardians, teachers and the wider school community
- * Give pupils opportunities to talk about bullying in general e.g., Circle Time.
- * Use of posters to stimulate discussion, involvement in poster design and display can assist in preventing bullying.
- * Use drama or role-play about bullying.
- * **Friendship Week:** Friendship week is held annually and promotes the themes of friendship, inclusion, communication and co-operation. These themes are explored on a whole-school basis. Anti-bullying behaviours and friendship skills are highlighted and discussed in class and at assembly.
- * **Student Council:** Student council representatives are elected in each class from 3rd – 6th. The Student Council members are elected to represent the views of all pupils to improve the school (Student Council members act as class representatives for Junior Infants to 2nd class in order to relay information to these classes and seek information/opinions from them). Prior to Student Council meetings each class has a discussion about the issues to be brought before the council. Pupils are encouraged to make suggestions for improving the school which may involve addressing any concerns they may have in relation to play, bullying and pupil relations.
- * School Assembly: Regular reminders of the school rules
- * Guest Speakers and workshops for pupils, parents and teachers
- * Class Contract
- * Christian Name Only (name-calling prevention)

*Encouraging non-teaching and ancillary staff to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers

The best way to address cyber-bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. Prevention and any awareness raising measures will focus on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying.

Appendix 4: Education and prevention strategies

Measures which may assist in highlighting awareness:

- Ask pupils to write anonymously about bullying and what should be done about it.
- Ask pupils to write about (or draw a plan of) areas of the school which are safe or unsafe and what should be done about this.
- Carry out a questionnaire survey.

The School's procedures for investigating and dealing with Bullying

6. 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:

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

(ii) 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;

(iii) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the teacher. In this way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. Pupils will be made aware that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly;

(iv) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners will report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

(v) Parents and pupils are required to co-operate 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;

(vi) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) will be informed and understand the above approach from the outset;

(vii) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;

(viii) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;

(ix) All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;

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

(xi) If a group is involved, each member may be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;

(xii) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;

(xiii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);

(xiv) In cases where it has been determined by the teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. See sanctions (refer to Code of Behaviour).

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;

(xv) Where the teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;

(xvi) It will also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school;

(xvii) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect;

(xviii) In cases where the relevant 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 has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the **recording template at Appendix 5**.

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the 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
- * Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;

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

(xxi) 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.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour:

The Board of Management will ensure that the school has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour and are documented in the school's anti-bullying policy. All records will be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

(i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the teacher, the teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;

(ii) If it is established by the teacher that bullying has occurred, the teacher must 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.

(iii) The teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 5** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

a) in cases where he/she 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; and

b) where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at **Appendix 5** must be completed in full and given to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at **Appendix 5** does not in any way preclude the teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

Teachers will record incidences which may indicate bullying tendencies

- Class teacher is responsible for recording bullying. Class teacher will use his/her professional judgement when dealing with reports of bullying.
- Incidents of bullying will be recorded on the school's Aladdin system and in a separate 'bullying book'.
- Parents should be notified when an entry is made into the 'bullying book'.
- Principal and deputy principal should be informed when a teacher records an incident of bullying on Aladdin and in the 'bullying book'.

- Records kept until child is 21. All entries must be signed and dated.
- Curriculum meetings in September/Information night for Parents- Internet safety should be discussed with parents at the meetings.
- At every staff meeting bullying will be on the agenda.
- Information on internet safety will be made available to parents.
- Teachers should discuss the anti-bullying policy with parents/children- everyone made aware of policy

Bullying as part of a continuum of behaviour:

It is important to note that bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. The school will refer to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate. In cases where a school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) should be sought.

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 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 Children 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 Schools*, be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

The *Child Protection Procedures 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 Services.

Supports for pupils affected by bullying

Restorative justice

- Perpetrator/Pupil affected by bullying will be interviewed separately.
- Prep for interview done individual.
- Children brought together for approx half an hour.
- Imbalance of power removed- Facilitator and pupils in room.
- Each side listened to- emphasis on empathy for both parties.
- Perpetrator discusses behaviour and reasons for behaviour.
- Pupil subjected to bullying has the chance to express feelings.

7. The class teacher and a SET teacher will provide a programme of support for pupils who have been bullied. Such pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.

This programme of support is also part of the school’s intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities will be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. The learning strategies applied

within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

9. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ [date].

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

12. 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 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: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

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

To: The School Community

The Board of Management of St. Enda's wishes to inform you that:

1. The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of 1/7/21 [date].

2. This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** (attached) of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed Thomas Hehner Date 01/07/2021
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed [Signature] Date 1/7/21
Principal