**Anti- Bullying Policy**

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines Ballycurrane National School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the frame work of the school’s overall code of behaviour. The policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in Sept. 2013.
2. The BOM 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 principals 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 whole 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 particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
* Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
* Supports of staff
* Consistent recording, investigating and follow up of bullying behaviour ( including use of established intervention strategies);and

Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti – bullying policy.

1. In accordance with the *Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* **bullying** **is defined** **as 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
* Physical Bullying
* Identity based bullying such as homophobic bullying based on a person’s membership of the travelling 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 will be dealt with as 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.

1. **The relevant teachers** for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows

**Both teachers**

1. **The education and prevention strategies (** including strategies specifically aimed at cyber bullying and identity- based bullying in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) will be as follows:

**Creation of a culture of “telling”**

* Teachers should repeatedly reinforce the message that if anyone is the victim of bullying behaviour they should not retaliate in any way, but they should tell an adult. Victims should be reassured that when they tell, something will be done about the bullying in a safe manner and all reported incidents will be dealt with.
* Class lessons to be provided to enable pupils “how to tell”(telling protocol)
* Bystanders can be key to resolving bullying and if anyone witnesses bullying behaviour, they should always tell a teacher. This is not telling tales but a means of protecting “victims”
* Workshops on bullying once a year

**Raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour by:**

* Displaying school’s anti-bullying statement( ***Bullying is wrong and is*** ***not tolerated in Ballycurrane N.S. We are a telling school)*** in the school foyer and other prominent places around the school environment.
* Going over aspects of bullying informally with all classes (What is bullying? What is not bullying? What to do if you feel you are being bullied? What to do if you see somebody else being bullied?)
* Engaging in formal teaching within the class setting through SPHE and RE (school to research materials on identity bullying)

**Other strategies**

* Formal programmes of work are a vital element in raising children’s self-esteem and equipping children to cope with bullying behaviour e.g. Walk Tall, RSE, Alive-O, Stay Safe,
* Positive reinforcement by teachers in Classroom setting (Class Dojo, Student of the week, Golden time, prizes, stars, stamps, etc.)
* Modelling of respectful behaviour and language by teachers and staff.
* Promotion of extra-curricular activities which encourage

co-operation among pupils (to extend this beyond sport)

* Affirming incidents of good and improved behaviour and showing acts of kindness at class and whole school level.
* Encouraging students to look out for each other and to be responsible for their own behaviour.
* All teachers are required to be vigilant on yard duty – record all incidences- monitor repeat offenders.
* Immediate affirmation of children who report incidents of bullying which they have witnessed.
* Circle – time sessions and role play are some of the methodologies used to discuss and explore issues of bullying.
* Each class to have a set of class rules which compliment the school’s Code of Behaviour.
* Renew the signs around the school.
* Ensure supervision at all times when pupils can access the internet.
* Teacher’s face-book accounts should be private.
* Sanctions for unauthorised use of the internet/electronic devices will be imposed as per the Code of Behaviour and AUP.
* All teachers do a lesson on internet safety –to coincide with Internet Safety Day.
* To focus on the topic of bullying at least one a year (Nov. Of each school year as per the recommendations from Dealing with bullying in Schools (Office of the Ombudsman for Children 2013)

1. **The school’s procedure for investigation, follow up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying as follows:**

**Incidents of bullying will be dealt with on a staged basis.**

**Stage 1**

All reports of bullying must be dealt with initially by the class teacher.

* When a pupil tells a teacher s/he is being bullied, it is important to gather all of the facts from both sides (What, where, when, who, why). This will involve an interview with the alleged bully using template in Appendices.
* In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best to resolve the situation.
* The aim of the class teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationship of the parties involved.(rather than apportion blame)
* Non teaching staff will be encourages to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
* The teacher should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach
* All sides are listened to separately and notes taken
* The notes are brief, factual and should be void of emotional or judgemental language.
* Instances are investigated outside the classroom to avoid public humiliation.
* All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regards to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.( See Anti-bullying procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 6.8.9. pgs. 30 – 31 for further suggestions).
* Where possible a witness is present.
* It is explained to the alleged bully how hurtful their behaviour is and attempts are made to encourage them to empathise with the alleged victim.
* The child/children involved will be asked to sign “Pupil Behaviour Promise “

**Stage 2**

If this child breaks promise and re-offends then the Principal with the class teacher will interview the child/children again. It is explained to them that this is their second time offending and that they have not committed to their promise. Again attempts will be made to resolve the situation. Once more students will sign the “**Pupil Behaviour Promise 2”.** This time this has to be signed by their parents. They are now advised that if they break this promise again, they will have a meeting with the principal and their parents and could face suspension.

* Pupils and parents are required to co-operate with any investigations and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
* Information spoken about should not become available, to prevent the victim from being further tormented. (Need to know basis)

**Stage 3**

If a child continues to bully the principal meets with the child/children and the parents and the child may be suspended for up to 3 days.

Note: In some cases the Board will decide which of the above stages they are at. This will be based on the information they have to hand and having listened to all sides of the story.

**Recording of incidents**

All incidents will be logged by the class teacher and incidents which have not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days will be recorded by the class teacher on the recording template as in Appendix 3 (*Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools )* This template will be completed in full and a copy given to the Principal. At least once every school term the principal will provide a report to the BOM setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported by means of this template and confirmation that all cases are being dealt with in accordance with the procedure.

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

**Victims:**

* Victims are reassured from the outset that they are not to blame.
* Strategies for restoring self-esteem are explored between teacher and parents.
* Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with the parents may be referred for counselling.
* Staged approach –class support, school support( as per Continuum- Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties NEPS)

**Bullies**

* Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling. They may need to to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. Empathy awareness needs to be developed.
* Staged approach –class support, school support( as per Continuum- Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties NEPS)
* Clinical referral and assessment may be necessary.
* Incidents of bullying can extend beyond the school and the journey to and from school is one which can provide particular opportunities for bullying to occur. The school’s policy should be given to those who are closely involved at this stage so that if bullying behaviour is witnessed by them they may report it to the school.
* In certain cases too it may be necessary to invite assistance from formal agencies such as Gardai(JLO) SHE, Local Youth Clubs.
* The school will constantly remind parents of the dangers of “cyber bullying” as can happen with the use of social networking sites and mobile phones. We also direct their attention to the school’s internet Acceptable Use Policy(AUP)

The school cannot be responsible for disagreements between pupils which happen outside the school grounds but will make reasonable efforts to co-operate with parents in assisting them to resolve the issues.

The suggestions of the *Cool Schools Programme* will be implemented when working with bullies and victims.

1. **Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

The BOM 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.

1. **Prevention of Harassment**

The BOM confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practical to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils and 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 travelling community.

1. The evaluation of the policy will happen on both an informal (through teacher observation ) and formal basis (use of surveys and questionnaires)

**Success criteria**

* Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils.
* Well-being and happiness of the whole school community in the light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered and fewer problems in the yard.
* Increase in numbers of children reporting.

1. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on

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1. This policy has been made available to school personnel and provided to the Parent’s Association. A copy of the policy will be made available to the Dept. And the Patron on request.
2. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the BOM once every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel and provided to the Parent’s Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Patron and the Dept.

Signed\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Chairman of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**List of Abbreviations**

BOM Board of Management

NS National School

SPHE Social, Personal, Health, Education

RE Religion Education

RSE Relationships & Sexuality Education

AUP Acceptable Use Policy

NEPS National Educational Psychological Service

JLO Juvenile Liaison Officer

SHE Safe Health Environment