

**Anti Bullying Policy**

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 Ballycurrane N.S. 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 and is in line with circular 0045/2013 which was published in September 2013.

This policy aims to produce a safe and caring environment in which all children can develop to their full potential. This policy revision supersedes all previous Anti-Bullying policies and documents adopted by the Board of Management.

The school does not tolerate or condone bullying of any form or at any level in the school community. The Board of management is committed to ensuring that all members of the school community –pupils, staff and parents are enabled to effectively deal with bullying. This policy guides action and organisation within the school for preventing and responding to bullying.

**Aims of Policy**.

1. To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidences of bullying behaviour

2. To build a positive school culture and climate see Appendix 1 3. To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management,teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.

4. To develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.

5. To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour.

**Definition of Bullying**

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

“ **Unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or** **group against another person or persons and which is repeated**”

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

• Identity based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying based on a person’s membership of the travelling community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Bullying may take many different forms such as physical aggression, damage to property, theft of property, extortion, intimidation, abusive telephone calls and texts, isolation, name calling, writing

notes, e-mailing, texting, posting messages on social networks. As a form of aggressive behaviour it is usually harmful and deliberate. It is persistent over time and makes it difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

It is important not to confuse bullying with isolated incidents of aggressive or anti-social behaviour, which must not be condoned. However when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it becomes bullying.

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

Parents

• Encourage positive behaviour and discourage negative behaviour both at home and at school.

• Encourage children to solve difficulties without resorting to aggression

• Encourage children to share, to be kind, to be caring and to be understanding towards others.

• Watch out for signs and symptoms that your child is being bullied or is bullying others

• Don’t dismiss your instincts as being wrong

• Discuss the school’s code of behaviour and anti-bullying policy with your child

• Support the school in its efforts to prevent and treat bullying.

**Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Bullying Incidents**

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

Bullying incidents should be reported initially to the class teacher and/or to the supervising teacher for investigation for investigation. This reporting may be done by the pupil, parent or a friend. All reported incidents which are deemed serious or are part of a pattern of behaviour will be noted, investigated and treated as circumstances require. Serious cases of bullying will be reported to the principal.

**Procedures for recording Bullying Incidents**

**Recording**: Noting and reporting of bullying behaviour is to be documented using the **template for** **recording bullying behaviour** . This template is in accordance with circular 0045/2013 see Appendix 2.

All members of the school community have a role to play in the prevention of bullying.

**Board of Management**

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring that all members of the school community are enabled to deal effectively with bullying. The Board will ensure that proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to prevent bullying and to deal with incidents appropriately as they arise.

**School Staff**

The school staff will foster an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance. Children’s self-esteem will be developed through celebrating achievements, acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and manners and providing opportunities for success throughout the curriculum and school.

Teachers will be vigilant, respond sensitively and caringly to children who disclose incidents of bullying and will investigate all disclosed incidents of bullying.

Teachers will discuss the code of behaviour and the anti-bullying policy with the pupils and use behavioural management strategies which focus on problem solving and enable pupils to take an active role in finding a solution to problems when they arise.

The formal curriculum of the school will also be used to educate all pupils against bullying.

**Pupils**

Pupils are expected to be tolerant and to have mutual respect for each other.

Pupils should report incidents of bullying to their parents and to their teacher.

The Primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues, and to restore, as far as it is possible, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame) and so with this in mind the schools procedures are as follows.

1. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type it is if it has and how best the situation might be resolved
2. ii. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s). In that way, pupils will gain confidence in “telling”. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying that they are not telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
3. iii. 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.
4. iv. It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.
5. Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.

**Education and Prevention Strategies**

1. SPHE- RSE and Anti bully specific lessons are taught every year in all classes
2. Monthly Assemblies- Student of the Month promoting kindness, helpfulness & respect shown to staff and all pupils
3. Cyber Bully Lessons- Webwise, digiducks and other relevant programmes. Zeeko Internet Safety for children, staff and parents every 3 to 4 years
4. Ethos of respect throughout the school
5. Inclusive practises for all
6. Wellbeing groups
7. Open Communication- Worry Jars in classrooms
8. At risks’ groups are carefully monitored
9. Individuality is promoted and encouraged e.g. children are encouraged to explore and share their knowledge of their particular areas of interest
10. Work in partnership with parents- open communication
11. School Rules are signed by parents and discussed with the children regularly.

**Responding to Bullying**

Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible but some incidents might best be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

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.

When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher(s) 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.

If a group is involved each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter all those involved could be met as a group.

When the relevant teacher(s) has/have determined that a pupil has been engaging in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school’s anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

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

In cases where it is determined by the relevant teacher(s) 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.

Support will be provided for anyone who is bullied by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk to their teacher or another teacher.

A victim will be assured that the school community will help them and put monitoring procedures in place to safeguard them.

The school will inform parents/guardians of what has happened and of the measures being taken to help them and to encourage them to report further incidents if they occur.

It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of parents and pupils) 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.

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.

Bullies may be excluded from the school yard at lunch break and may be subject to special monitoring procedures and if bullying continues they may be suspended in accordance with procedure.

Any pupil who is involved in retaliation against a pupil who reports bullying will be subject to the school’s code of behaviour. Incidents of bullying will be used as opportunities for re-enforcing the anti-bullying policy of the school. Follow-up meetings may be may be arranged to assess progress and/or to restore relationships.

**Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

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

**Oversight Arrangements**

In accordance with circular 0045/2013 the principal will provide a report at each board of Management meeting setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported to the principal and confirmation that the cases have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the school’s anti bullying policy.

The policy and its implementation will be reviewed and checklist completed see Appendix 3 by the Board of Management once in each school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be available to school personnel 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 officials.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and will be provided on ratification to the Parents Association. The Policy is also sent to all parents with enrolment forms and will be published on website when active.

This review supersedes all previous policy documents and was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on

Chairperson Date

Principal Date

**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 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. o
* 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.