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Ballycullane NS Anti-Bullying Policy

1. **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 Ballycullane 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. **Key Principles of Best Practice**

   The Board of Management recognizes 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 whole-school community 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 in an age appropriate way, 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
   ● On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

   For further details see Section 6 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures (Circular 0045/2013)

3. **The Definition of 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.

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

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying, extortion, isolation and persistent name calling

- cyber-bullying and

- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller/Roma community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

This definition includes a wide range of behaviour, verbal or written, physical or social, targeting person or property, carried out directly or indirectly or through any electronic or other medium, which could harm a pupil or undermine his/her self-esteem or self-confidence.

Appendix 1 gives additional information on different types of bullying behaviour as set out in Section 2.2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*. This list is not exhaustive.

Who is responsible for doing what

- The "Relevant Teacher(s)" for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school will normally be th*e* class teacher.
- All staff are responsible for promoting positive behaviour and for dealing with bullying behaviour in the appropriate way.
- The ISM team will lead staff in the annual review of the anti-bullying policy.

Our Education and Prevention Strategies

- The Education and Prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows: (Using guidance of Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):*

- Our Code of Conduct emphasises RESPECT for ourselves and others.

- Implementation of the "Stay Safe Programme"

- Build self-esteem through the use of the "Walk Tall" program

- Specifically teach internet and cyber safety using "Webwise" or an equivalent program. Parents and students are advised that it is illegal for a child under 13 to register with and use many social media networks, including Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat

- Ballycullane NS endeavours to block access to inappropriate websites, using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems. Pupils are not allowed to work on the Internet within the school without a member of staff or other adult present.

- Periodically have parent/ classroom information seminars/ speakers dealing with bullying and cyberbullying in particular.

- Friendship Week

- Avail of and encourage professional development opportunities for staff members. These are normally provided by our local Education Centre.

- United Nations Rights of the Child may be used in Senior classes. This is particularly good in dealing with name calling and identity based bullying.

- Encourage, praise and sometimes reward acts of random kindness/ respect

- Our Supervision Policy lessens opportunities for bullying behaviour as well as monitoring vulnerable children

- In Ballycullane National School we actively encourage children to speak up. Teachers and other staff seek to establish supportive respectful relationships with students so that, if a child finds themselves in difficulty, they will feel comfortable and confident about approaching a staff member.

Special Educational Needs

We are particularly aware of the vulnerability of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) to bullying because of their difficulties with social interaction and communication.

Role of the bystander

An understanding of the role of the bystander in preventing and dealing with bullying is also key to implementing this anti-bullying policy.

The School will:

- foster and enhance the self-esteem of all our pupils.

- develop and promote the Anti-Bullying code for the school.

- promote respect for diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

- encourage parents to promote kind behaviour in their children and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the relevant teacher or any staff member

- facilitate whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all the staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it.

- ensure adequate supervision in classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.

- discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with pupils. All parents/guardians are referred to the school policies on the school website when their child starts school.

- implement whole school awareness measures e.g. regular activities to raise awareness, an annual Wellbeing Week, seminars for parent(s)/guardian(s), student surveys, assemblies

- It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not telling tales but are behaving responsibly.

- ensure that access to technology within the school is strictly monitored. Home and school share responsibility in ensuring that the pupils do not have mobile phones in school and that the internet is used responsibly.

Curriculum implementation

- SPHE, RSE and Stay Safe Programmes will be fully implemented.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying, from evidence-based programmes, i.e. Stay Safe Programme, Zippy's Friends, The Walk Tall Programme.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.

Links to other policies

- School policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying are The Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding Policy, Policy on the Supervision of Pupils, Internet Acceptable Use policy, Policy on Attendance

Procedures for Investigating, follow up and recording of bullying

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):

• The primary aim for the relevant 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)

• 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

• 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 factor 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.

• Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, Special Needs Assistants(SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

• 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

• It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset

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

• Incidents are generally best 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 useful information in this way

• When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant 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

• If a group is involved, each member should 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

• 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

• It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident

• In cases where it has been determined by the relevant 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 (by reference to the school policy). The school should 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

• Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged 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 must 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

•Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should 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

• 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 (see appendix)

• In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account

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

• 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

• 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.

• While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant 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

• If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant 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.

• The relevant teacher must use the recording template (see appendix) to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances

  o 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 has occurred and

  o Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable

• In each of these circumstances, the recording template (see appendix) must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

The School's Programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows

The school will work with the alleged bullies and their victims in revising the programmes above, and with one-to-one support in resolving the issues raised.

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves discussing the incidents with the pupils, reassuring them that they were right to bring the events to the attention of staff, that they were not telling tales and their actions will help others, they will be reminded that they should tell again if they have any new concerns. The teacher(s) involved and the principal will check from time to time with the child that everything is ok.

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.

Equality Legislation

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

1. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 7th November 2023

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

3. 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' Representatives. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.

Signed: Fr. William Byrne   Signed: Deirdre Byrne

         Chairperson of Board of Management   Principal

Date: 7th November 2023

Date of next review: November 2024

Appendix 2 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) engaged in bullying behaviour

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 2   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 marginalizing 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.