

Ballyvary Central NS

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 Ballyvary Central NS 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.

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.

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 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.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying as are follows:
Principal plus all teaching staff.

The Education and Prevention strategies that will be used by Ballyvary Central NS are as follows:

- School Ethos (copies of which are displayed in each class room). One of the key elements of our Anti-Bullying policy has been the fostering of a school environment based upon mutual respect for all. Our belief is that everybody has the right to:
 - work/learn in a physically and psychologically safe environment
 - be treated with respect and dignity
 - to be treated with equality and fairness
 - have access to an appropriate and effective grievance process
 - Implement the School Discipline Policy with emphasis on mutual respect and support.
 - Implement the School Supervision Policy.
 - Stay Safe Programme-is a personal skills safety programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including the ability to recognise and cope with bullying.
 - SPHE Curriculum-makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as interrelated areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.
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- The Grow in Love Programme promotes the idea of treating all with respect.
 - School Assembly: At weekly assembly we choose a type of behaviour to focus on for the week e.g. courteous behaviour-saying please and thank you etc.
 - Class Meetings: Principal has weekly class meetings with class group (Senior Classes or classes at risk) to discuss any issues which may arise in the class group.
 - The role of Senior Pupils: Senior Pupils take on the role of carers especially of younger and weaker children. They are encouraged to report to Principal/class teacher if they feel that any child is being treated unfairly/bullied.
 - Open Door Policy: Parents are encouraged to contact the school immediately if they become aware of any issue of bullying behaviour.

- Anti-Bullying Week- 4th Week in September (teachers focus on acceptable forms of behaviour and discuss school charter e.g. different types of bullying/cyber bullying etc.)
- The use of various programme to build confidence, self-esteem and promote positive behaviour e.g. *'Stop, Think, Do Programme by Lindy Peterson with Alyson Adderley'*
- All staff including S.N.A, caretaker and secretary to be made aware of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

The Schools procedures for investigation and dealing with bullying

1. The primary aim for the staff of Ballyvary Central NS 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);
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 will 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 will 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 such as secretaries, bus driver, caretakers, cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the staff members.
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 is 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;
8. Incidents will as far as possible 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 pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;
10. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teachers will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
11. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will 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 a group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
13. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
14. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will 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. Where the relevant 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;
16. 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;
17. 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;
18. 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 will be recorded by the relevant teacher in the Incident Book/Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

19. In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the teacher will, 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;
20. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will 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 will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

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 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;
- (ii) 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 is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- (iii) The relevant teacher will use the Incident Book/Template for recording Bullying Behaviour 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 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.

Referral of serious cases to the HSE

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 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 and Post-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.

Support for pupils affected by bullying

A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied must be in place. Such pupils may need counseling 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.

A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour must also be 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 should be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. It is, therefore, important that 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 counseling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

Our schools support for pupils affected by Bullying will include:

- Class/Group/Individual will have specific class time/circle time to build and enhance self-esteem. Programmes used will include:
 - ‘How to promote Childrens Social and Emotional Competence’ by Carolyn Webster Stratton- which focuses on ways to encourage students positive behavior and build their confidence and self-esteem
 - ‘Talkabout’ by Alex Kelly-which is a social communications skills package designed to be used with children with communication skills difficulties and provides teachers with a framework for the development of social skills
 - ‘Stop, Think, Do’ by Lindy Peterson with Allyson Adderly is a social skills Training Programme which aims to develop the social competence and emotional intelligence children need in order to make and keep friends.
- Group Meetings/Individual Meeting-Principal/Teacher will meet with group/individual on a regular basis(weekly/fortnightly)
- School Home Contact-Principal/Teacher will meet with parent/child in child’s home (if it is deemed necessary and beneficial) and will have on-going communication with parent/child to assess how child is coping.
- Extra Curricular Activities- child will be encouraged to get involved in extra curricular activities aimed at promoting self-confidence, self-esteem and self-discipline
- Peers Support/School Alert- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers. Pupils are encouraged to support and include any child who may have been subject to bullying behavior.

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.

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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 22/12/2020

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.

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: Vincent M Hele
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Carmel Heaney
(Principal)

Date: 22/12/2020

Date: 22/12/2020

Date of next review: 16/11/2021