



Ballymore National School

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**Under the Patronage of the Church of Ireland
Bishop of Derry and Raphoe.**

Notification regarding the Board of Management's review of Antibullying Policy

To: THE BALLYMORE NATIONAL SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The Board of Management of Ballymore National School wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's Anti-bullying policy was completed at the start of year board meeting on 14/09/2022.
- The policy is available for viewing on the school website or by request from the school office.

Signed: W. George Irwin

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 14/09/2022

Signed: ait Mí Chuireán

Principal

Date: 14/09/22



**BALLYMORE CHURCH OF IRELAND NATIONAL SCHOOL.
BALLYMORE, DUNFANAGHY, CO. DONEGAL.**

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Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Introduction

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 Ballymore 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. Preventing and Tackling Bullying

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; (see appendix 6 for strategies which may be used to this end)
- 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.

3. What is, and what is not 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.

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.

4. Relevant Teacher/s

The class teacher will have responsibility for investigating and dealing with first incidents of potential bullying behaviour. A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school but class teacher is first port of call. It is the responsibility of the person to whom the report is made to pass on the relevant information to the class teacher of the child/children concerned. Individual teachers will take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's code of behaviour policy.

In some instances the Deputy-principal or principal may become involved immediately in the investigation.

The procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour are set out in section 6 of this policy.

5. Education and prevention strategies

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

School-wide approach

Our school ethos promotes an atmosphere of friendship, tolerance, respect and co-operation. It is within this context that the following proactive strategies are incorporated into our school year.

- Staff are constantly vigilant of children's behaviour. Positive behaviour is modelled recognised and affirmed throughout the school. Children are explicitly taught what respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in promotion of positive behaviour. Deliberate efforts are made by the staff to notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour. Children are rewarded regularly at class level for positive efforts and certificates for "stars of the week" are awarded at assemblies to recognise the special efforts children have made. Children from 3rd to 6th classes are rewarded on Friday afternoon with "Golden time". Records are kept of children's behaviour. Where a child is having difficulty with his/her behaviour he/she is given the necessary support.

In this way, our goal is to follow up and follow through with pupils who struggle to follow the rules.

- Promoting positive friendships through activities such as establishing buddy systems, examining what friendship means, how friends should treat each other, developing and displaying key messages about positive aspects of friendship.
- The school implements the Stay Safe & Relationships and Sexuality education programmes.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it -prevention and intervention.
- The anti-bullying campaign.ie will be implemented from 3rd -6th. This creates a positive atmosphere where bullying shall be dealt with immediately.
- **Children from Infants- 2nd will be made aware of bullying, what it is and most of all what is expected of everybody in our school community.**
- Awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour is addressed in the classroom, at school assemblies.
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- We ensure adequate supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school- displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) *are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school in junior infants and will be available in hardcopy in the school office.*
- The school's Child Protection policy sets out in detail provisions to promote the safety of pupils and reduce the possibilities for bullying.
- The school's mobile phone policy sets out in detail provisions to obviate the possibilities of bullying using mobile phones during school-day and after school hours.
- *The school's ICT Acceptable Use Policy sets out in detail provisions to obviate the possibilities of bullying using computers on the school premises during the school day and use of electronic gadgets after school hours.*

- Staff will strive to ensure that self-confidence and self-esteem of pupils, especially those identified as being at risk, is safeguarded and promoted wherever possible - especially in artistic and sporting activities
- *The school's weekly assembly and prize giving is utilised to reinforce the caring, respectful ethos of the school and to emphasize the responsibility of all pupils to ensure bullying behaviour does not go unchecked.*
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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.
- Staff consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory and inappropriate language in the school this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN

Links to other policies

This is a list school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying, e.g.

Code of Behaviour

Child Protection policy

Supervision of pupils Acceptable Use policy

Attendance Sporting activities

6. Procedures for investigation, follow up and recording and intervention

Key Principal Aim

The primary aim 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);

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach. Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

First Report

Any person in the school community, a pupil, staff member, parent/guardian may report an incident of a serious negative behaviour towards another individual. The class teacher will usually deal with the complaint. In investigating and dealing with negative behaviour, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether potential

bullying has occurred and how best the situation can be resolved in the junior classes. If in investigating the incident, previous unreported incidents are referred to, the staff member should take note and record this information using Appendix 3 'Teachers Records', but treat this report as the first incident formally noted. Teachers will take a calm, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of potential bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents/ guardians. In any incident of alleged bullying the teacher initially will carry out a class survey (see Appendix 1 Classroom Survey) followed by an interview with alleged bully if needed (see Appendix 2 Discussion and Commitment). All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity. A written record of the incident will be kept in the class teacher's behaviour records, and all class surveys will be kept in the class cabinet for one year. As bullying is defined as behaviour that is "systematic and ongoing" a first incident of aggressive behaviour is not viewed as bullying unless there are subsequent incidents. Negative behaviour will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

If the teacher concludes that this negative type of behaviour could lead to bullying, the child/children involved will be made aware of this and the consequences of similar behaviours reoccurring (as outlined in the following sections)

The child is then asked to sign a pupil behaviour promise, agreeing to refrain from bullying (see Appendix 2 Discussion and Commitment). In the first instance of cyber bullying, the child involved is asked to sign a pupil behaviour promise, agreeing to refrain from bullying. In this situation, the parent is informed immediately.

Second Incident

This would still be dealt with by the class teacher. In our school this means another survey will be carried out. A similar approach to that identified above will be used to investigate the incident. An incident report will be written and filed in the teachers records using Appendix 3 Teacher Record. Parents of the children involved will be informed of the incident and a meeting will be arranged with them and the class teacher. The child that is allegedly being bullied is given a chance to give their side of the story in a confidential manner. Records will be kept of parent/teacher conferences and strategies to address behaviours.

The child who has been found to be bullying for a second time is then asked to sign a second pupil behaviour promise, agreeing to refrain from bullying (see Appendix 2 Discussion and Commitment)

If there is a second instance of cyber-bullying, it will be cause for suspension and the pupil will have to sign the second behaviour promise also.

The parents of the pupil(s) being bullied will also be advised to bring their complaint to An Garda Siochana.

Third and Subsequent Incidents

Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her that he/she is in breach of his/her pupil behaviour promise. Every effort will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied, with hi/her parents present.

An appropriate intervention strategy will be determined in consultation between the relevant teacher (and the Principal where appropriate.) Parents will also be consulted.

Where disciplinary sanctions are applied, these occur in line with the school's Code of Behaviour. At this stage, suspension will be the sanction imposed.

It will be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where such 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. Research suggests that this can have a positive therapeutic effect and considerably reduce the risk of reoccurrence.

Should there be a third occurrence of cyber-bullying, given the seriousness of the impact this has on the pupil(s) being bullied, if all other avenues of resolution fail, the child will be expelled in line with the School's Code of Behaviour.

Reviewing Process

In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately resolved/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 Standard Recording Template at Appendix 5.

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately resolved/addressed by regular class surveys, the relevant teacher, as part of his/her professional judgement, will 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 Principal;

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;

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.

At every stage of the process, parents and pupils are expected and required to cooperate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. Any lack of cooperation will be referred to the Board of Management.

7. Supporting pupils affected by bullying

Intervention Strategies

International research shows that interventions that engage perpetrators in understanding the impact of their actions and in taking responsibility for making up for hurt caused are most effective. Research also suggests that schools should make use of a combination of methods to achieve this. Accordingly, where it has been established that a bullying incident has occurred, the school will draw upon the following acknowledged intervention strategies:

- Strengthening the Target
- Mediation
- Restorative Practice
- Support Group Method

In instances of seriously malicious bullying or repeated bullying the school will take the Direct Sanctions Approach.

Bullied pupils:

- Ending the bullying behaviour,
- Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations.
- After resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a victim impact statement,
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in mindfulness/group work, group work in class and in extra –curricular group or team activities during or after school)
- Implementing a “buddy system” in the school (if applicable).

Bullying pupils:

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this,
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g participation in mindfulness /group work in

class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),

- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behavior in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a "clean sheet" in return for keeping a promise to reform.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible. The school's Child Protection and Supervision policies give explicit direction on this issue.

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. Adoption, Communication and Implementation of Policy

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

This policy will be made available to school personnel, the Parent Teacher Association and is available in hard copy from the office.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel and the Parent Teacher Association.

Signed: W. George Irwin
W. George Irwin
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: Nigel Morrow
Nigel Morrow
Principal

Date: 13/06/2019.

Date: 13/6/19.