

# Anti bullying Policy: Ballinacarriga NS



1. 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 **BALLINACARRIGA 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. 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 on the implementation of anti-bullying policy.
  - 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 and homophobic 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. 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. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

The class teacher

|  |          |                                  |
|--|----------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Junior, Senior</b>                        | <b>:</b> | <b>Ms. Kelly &amp; Ms. Nagle</b> |
| <b>1<sup>st</sup> &amp; 2<sup>nd</sup>:</b>  |          | <b>Ms. Jennings</b>              |
| <b>3<sup>rd</sup> &amp; 4<sup>th</sup>:</b>  |          | <b>Mrs. McSweeney/Ms.Murray</b>  |
| <b>5<sup>th</sup> &amp; 6<sup>th</sup> :</b> |          | <b>Mr. O Driscoll</b>            |

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

### **Addressing Cyber Bullying/Bullying**

Educate the children on appropriate on-line behaviour, how to stay safe on line, and also develop a culture of reproofing any concerns about cyber bullying.

Be aware of access to technology from within the school.

Develop an opportunity through curricular and extra-curricular to develop a positive sense of self-worth.

Tackling and preventing bullying for the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN, should focus on:

- Inclusion
- Developing social skills
- Pay attention to transition from primary to post primary.
- Cultivate a school culture which has respect for all and helps one another.

A staff day on the subject of bullying.

Teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives.

- S.P.H.E. lessons
- Stay Safe programme
- Webwise lessons
- Effective Supervision and monitoring of pupils.

Within the teaching of all subjects we can foster an attitude of respect for all.

English : – poetry / stories – to stimulate discussion.

S.P.H.E. : – attitudes to respecting one another.

Geog / History : – references to negative aspects of power.

P.E : Co-operation through team sports, sporting activities can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression.

6. 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:

#### **Investigation**

#### **Follow Up**

#### **Recording**

#### **Est. Intervention**

#### **Investigation and Follow up**

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.

- (i) All reports of bullying must be investigated 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.
- (ii) Non-teaching staff i.e. secretaries, SNAs must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teachers.
- (iii) Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues.
- (iv) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- (v) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure privacy of all involved.

- (vi) 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.
- (vii) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why and not accept "*I was only joking*" as a defense. This should be done in a calm manner, setting example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- (viii) If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should meet as a group.
- (ix) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incidents.
- (x) 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.
- (xi) 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.
- (xii) It must be made clear also to all involved (each set of pupil and parents), that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his/her parents and the school.
- (xiii) 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:
  - Whether the bullying has ceased;
  - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
- (xiv) Where a parent is not satisfied, that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with the procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's Complaints Procedures.

**Procedures for recording bullying behaviour.**

The B.O.M. must ensure that the school has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour and they must be documented in the school's anti-bullying policy. All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour must 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 discussion with those involved regarding same.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 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) or (b) above, the recording template at Appendix 3 must be completed in full and provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

**Established Intervention strategy:-**The following is an overview of the six main responses to addressing bullying behaviour (Rigby, K., 2010, 2014):

1. The Traditional Disciplinary Approach
2. Strengthening the Victim
3. Mediation
4. **Restorative Practice**
5. The Support Group Method
6. The Method of Shared Concern

In deciding on which method to use, the following factors should be taken into account:

- the nature of the cases (some are dealt with more effectively with one method than another)
- the level of training and skill that the teachers have in applying the method.

Please see the PDST's Anti bullying support material on line for more information

**Equal States Act.**

Schools may not permit students to harass other students.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

**Support for pupils affected by bullying.**

(i) An appropriate programme of support for pupils who have been bullied will be put in place taking into consideration the circumstances surrounding such incidents. Our programme will promote opportunities to participate on activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.

(ii) 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. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

**Supports**

- Buddy System/ Buddy Bench
- Awareness Raised Circle Time
- Friends for life

- Inclusive games both in classtime and in the yard.
- Worry Box System
- One on one time with teachers to discuss issues

**8. 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.

**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. civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, is readily accessible to parents and pupils on our website and provided to the Parents’ Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. 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, be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request 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: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3 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

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|--|
|  |
|  |
|  |

### 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

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### 9. Details of actions taken

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant Teacher) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal \_\_\_\_\_