St. John the Baptist Primary School

BALLAGHKEENE N.S.

THE BALLAGH,
ENNISCORTHY,
CO. WEXFORD

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 St. John the Baptist N.S. Ballaghkeene 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 teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

All teaching staff at Ballaghkeene N.S. are relevant teachers.

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

- Implementation of the Stay Safe Programme every January/ February and other aspects of the SPHE Programme which teach children to be assertive, to develop a positive sense of self worth and how to recognise and say NO to Bullying. Pupils are encouraged to report incidences of bullying and are assured that all reports will be investigated.
- Bringing SEN pupils on a tour of their Second Level School in May/ June and having a strong focus on inclusion for SEN pupils generally with particular focus on social skills on PPPs.

- Constant focus on Group work throughout the curriculum and teaching aggressive pupils to manage their emotions during P.E. and participating on school teams.
- Explicitly addressing homophobic bullying during Stay Safe in 5th / 6th classes.
- Addressing cyber bullying during teaching of Stay Safe Program in 5th/ 6th classes.
- Supervision and monitoring of pupil activities and games, in class, in changing rooms and particularly in the school yard, where bullying is most likely to occur.
- Public acknowledgement of good behaviour through weekly "Student of the Week" awards. "Catching" children being good.
- Public display of notices admonishing bullying behaviour and encouraging "buddy" behaviour. Involving pupils in development of these messages. "Kindness awards"
- Constant articulation of the school motto and mission statement which espouses respect and fair play.
- Involving Student Council members in decision-making around prevention of bullying.
- Modelling of respectful behaviour by all staff. Consistently tackling derogatory language.
- Involving the Parents' Association in raising awareness.
- Identifying "hotspots" where supervision is less structured.

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 PostPrimarySchools*):

i. 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);
ii. 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;
iii. 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;
iv. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
v. 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;
vi. It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
vii. Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
viii. Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
ix. 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;

x. 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;

xi. 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;

xii. Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;

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

xiv. 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. 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;

xv. 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;

xvi. 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;

xvii. 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;

xviii. In cases where the relevant teacher has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at **Appendix 3**

xix. 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 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;

xx. 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;

xxi. 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.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

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 and report it immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.
The recording template at **Appendix 3** 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 at **Appendix 3** 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.

Bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. To ensure that any such cases are dealt with appropriately, our school's anti bullying policy is linked with our overall code of behaviour and provides for referral to be made to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate.

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

- Pupils who have been bullied will be offered sessions with the SEN teachers 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.
- Pupils involved in bullying behaviour must will need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities should be developed to increase feelings of self-worth through the SPHE programme.
- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

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.

Ratification of Policy

Last review date: October 2023

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 7/10/24.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). 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 (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: Geraldine Waters
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Darren Nolan
(Principal)

Date of next review: October 2025

Appendix 2 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 ignored.
- 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.
    - 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.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

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

Name: _____ Class: _____

Name: _____ Class: _____

Name: _____ Class: _____

Name: _____ Class: _____

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:

Racist ☐

Homophobic ☐

Disability/ SEN related ☐

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 4: Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required. Yes /No

	Yes	No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?	✓	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	✓	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	✓	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	✓	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	✓	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	✓	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	✓	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	✓	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	✓	
Has the Board received and minuted the Child Protection Oversight report summary reports of the Principal?	✓	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's Child Protection Oversight report to the Board?	✓	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	✓	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?		✓
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?		✓
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?		✓
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?		✓
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas		

for improvement?		✓

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: Darren Nolan Date: 7/10/2024
Principal