Ballyhaunis Community School

Anti-Bullying Policy

2023

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 **Ballyhaunis Community 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) Promoting 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;

    See Appendix 1: Key elements of a positive school culture and climate

    and Appendix 2: Practical tips for building a school culture and climate

(b) Effective leadership

(c) A school-wide approach

(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

(e) 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;

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

(g) Supports for staff

(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and

(i) 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- Incidents occurring within school hours will be dealt with under the schools Anti-bullying Policy and the School's Code of Behaviour. Incidents outside school hours/during weekends/over school holidays will be dealt with in school but not necessarily under the schools Anti-bullying policy or the Code of Behaviour.

- 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.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

See Appendix 3 for additional information on different types of bullying

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

Year-Head(s) for each relevant year group.

The primary aim for Year-Head 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 Year-Head will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;

When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the Year-Head will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be carried out in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

Extreme care and sensitivity will, at all times, be exercised when investigating bullying incidents.

5. 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:

Prevention strategies

School-wide approach
- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- 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.
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular 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.
- Involvement of the senior student mentors in contributing to a safe school environment that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be included in student journals and displayed publicly in common areas of the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s)s are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour at the beginning of the school year.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell.
- To implement the Box and Interview technique with Junior Students. This approach provides students the opportunity to 'tell' by completing a questionnaire about bullying.
- Implementation of whole school measures including: Poster Campaigns, Surveys etc.
- To create a 'telling school' environment where students feel free to speak to those in authority without fear of the stigma of 'telling tales'.
- Encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- The Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
- The following supports are being used in the school: Knock Counselling Service, CAHMS (Child and Adolescence Mental Health Services), NEWB, NBSS and NEPS.
- Other supports available :
  - o   The Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Support Service - www.sphe.ie
  - o   The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) - www.pdst.ie

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE and CSPE curricula and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes, e.g. Cool School Lessons, Stay Safe Programme, On My Own Two Feet.
- School wide delivery of lessons on various forms of bullying will be delivered using a wide variety of programs at the discretion of the school.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils.

Links to other policies

- School policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying, e.g. Code of Behaviour, Child Protections policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Admissions Policy, Sporting activities, School Tours policy, Substance Use policy, RSE policy.

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:

<u>Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying</u>

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including staff, pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

<u>Reporting bullying behaviour</u>

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant Year Head.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them.

<u>Investigating and dealing with incidents: - see Appendix 5: established intervention strategies</u>

1. Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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;

2. Any bullying incident will be recorded on VS ware by the reporting staff member and dealt with by the Year Head.

3. The Year Head will meet both parties separately. It may be appropriate to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s); If necessary students who are on the fringes of the incident will also be heard.

4. The Year Head keeps records of meetings and records events.

5. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the Year Head will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why.

6. The Year Head in conjunction with management will determine if bullying behaviour has occurred.

7. In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved will be contacted to inform them of the matter.

8. Where it has been 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.

9. It will be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s))

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that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.

Follow up

1. In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the Year Head will, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
    a. Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
    b. Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
    c. Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
    d. Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s)s or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

2. All parties will be offered support from a member of the Pastoral Care Team and follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will take place separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.

3. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents/ guardians can make a written complaint to the Board of Management.

4. In the event that parents/ guardians have exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, parents/ guardians can make a written complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of bullying behaviour

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred
- All staff will report any bullying incidents on VS ware witnessed by them or notified to them. These reports will be passed on to the relevant Year Head
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the Year Head. The Year Head will keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- The Year Head will inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred
- If it is established that bullying has occurred, the Year Head 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 in conjunction with the Pastoral Care team.
- The school facilitates the secure storage of all records retained by the Year Head.

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3

- The Year Head will use the record of bullying behaviour sheet (**Appendix 4)** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
- 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

- 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.

- When the recording template is used, it will be retained by the Year Head in question and a copy maintained by the principal for 10 years.

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

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
    - Pastoral care system
    - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
    - Tutor/Year Head system
    - Care team/ Learning Support Team

- If pupils require counselling of further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

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.

- There are agreed appropriate monitoring and supervision practices in the school.
- Bullying danger spots have been identified.
- The student support/care structures promote personal safety with students. In particular Year Heads, Class Tutors, Chaplain, SPHE teachers, Guidance, RE, CSPE, Learning Support teachers initiate, support and promote measures to counteract bullying behaviour.
- Senior students will be involved as a resource to assist in counteracting bullying through the mentor programme.
- Link to Acceptable Use policy of school regarding use of communication technology.

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. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on the 31/01/23.

11. 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.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. (See Appendices 6 and 7). 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: *Mary Reaney*

      (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: *David McDonagh*

      (Principal)

Date: 31/05/2024

Date of next review: 31/05/2025

Appendix 1: Key elements of a positive school culture and climate

- The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
- The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
- The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
- The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.
- The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
- The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
- The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.
- The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.
- The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
- The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

Appendix 2: Practical tips for building a school culture and climate

- 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 absent.
- 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 - Examples of bullying behaviours

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • The "look" • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
Cyber	• **Denigration**: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation • **Harassment**: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • **Impersonation**: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name • **Flaming**: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • **Trickery**: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • **Outing**: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • **Exclusion**: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • **Cyber stalking**: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology
Identity Based Behaviours **Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation** (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).	

Homophobic and Transgender	• Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include: • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • "Bitching" • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The "look" • Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way
Sexual	• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	• Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person's disability • Setting others up for ridicule

Appendix 4

Record of Bullying Behaviour Sheet.

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 (Please Circle)	**4. Location** of incidents (Please Circle)
Pupil concerned	Playground
Other Pupil	Classroom
Parent	Corridor
Teacher	Toilets
Other	School Bus
	Other

5. **Name of person(s) who reported** the bullying concern:

_____

6. **Type** of Bullying Behaviour (Please Circle)

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: e.g: Homophobic, Disability/SEN Related, Racist, Membership of Traveller Community, Other (Please Specify)**

_____
_____
_____
_____

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed: _____ (Year Head) Date: _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Appendix 5

Established intervention strategies
- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s)s to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Restorative interviews

Appendix 6

Checklist for Annual Review of the
Anti-Bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management of Ballyhaunis Community School 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
1. 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*?	
2. Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
3. Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
4. 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 proceduresin their day to day work?	
5. Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
6. Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
7. Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
8. Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
9. Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
10. Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	

	Yes/No
11. 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 periodic report to the Board?	
12. Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
13. Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
14. Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
15. 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?	
16. Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
17. Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

_____

Chairperson

Board of Management   **Date:**_____

_____

Secretary

Board of Management

Appendix 7: Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

Ballyhaunis Community School

To: Ballyhaunis Community School Stakeholders

The Board of Management of **Ballyhaunis Community School** wishes to inform you that:

o   The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementationwas completed at the Board meeting of _____ [date].

o   This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.*

   https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/cb6966-anti-bullying-procedures-for-primary-and-post-primary-schools/

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Chairperson

Board of Management

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Secretary

Board of Management