

# **Ballinlough NS**

## **Anti – Bullying Policy 2014**

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 Ballinlough N.S. 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) 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:

**Table A: 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 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.

## **(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;
- effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;

### **(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.

- 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 form 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**.

**Examples of bullying behaviours**

<p><b>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.</li> <li>• Physical aggression</li> <li>• Damage to property</li> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Slagging</li> <li>• The production, display or circulation of written works, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person</li> <li>• Offensive graffiti</li> <li>• Extortion</li> <li>• Intimidation</li> <li>• Insulting or offensive gestures</li> <li>• The 'look'</li> <li>• Invasion of person space</li> <li>• A combination of any of the types listed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>CYBER</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DENIGRATION: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation.</li> <li>• HARRASSMENT: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing message to an individual.</li> <li>• IMPERSONATION: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name.</li> <li>• FLAMING: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight.</li> <li>• TRICKERY: Fooling someone into sharing person information which you then post online.</li> <li>• OUTING: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</li> <li>• EXCLUSION: Purposefully excluding some from an online group.</li> <li>• CYBER STALKING: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety</li> <li>• Silent telephone/mobile phone calls</li> <li>• Abusive telephone/mobile calls.</li> <li>• Abusive text messages</li> <li>• Abusive email</li> <li>• Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles</li> <li>• Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures</li> <li>• Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</li> </ul>

<b>Identity Based Behaviours</b> <b>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation</b> (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).	
<b>Homophobic and Transgender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation</li> <li>• Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation</li> <li>• Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian.. used in a derogatory manner</li> <li>• Physical intimidation or attacks</li> <li>• Threats</li> </ul>
<b>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background</li> <li>• Exclusion on the basis of any of the above.</li> </ul>
<b>Relational</b>	<p>This involves manipulation relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malicious gossip</li> <li>• Isolation &amp; exclusion</li> <li>• Ignoring</li> <li>• Excluding from the group</li> <li>• Taking someone’s friends away</li> <li>• “Bitching”</li> <li>• Spreading rumours</li> <li>• Breaking confidence</li> <li>• Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear</li> <li>• The “look”</li> <li>• Use of terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way.</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching</li> <li>• Harassment</li> </ul>
<b>Special Educational Needs Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying.</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues</li> <li>• Mimicking a person’s disability</li> <li>• Setting others up for ridicule</li> </ul>

**4.** The relevant teacher(s) for investigation and dealing with bullying is (are) AS FOLLOWS: ( see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools).

Refer to section 6.8.3. and 6.8.4. in the Procedures.

**Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.**

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; (see Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedure for Primary and Post Primary Schools).

### **6.5 Implementation of education and prevention strategies including awareness raising**

6.5.1 The prevention of bullying must be an integral part of the written anti-bullying policy of all primary and post-primary schools. Every school must document in its anti-bullying policy the specific education and prevention strategies that the school will implement. This must include documenting the measures being taken by the school to explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.

6.5.2 Effective practice includes prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying and involves strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.

6.5.3 As self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour, schools should, through both their curricular and extra-curricular programmes, provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.

6.5.4 Initiatives and programmes focused on developing pupils' awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects, should deal explicitly with the issue of identity-based bullying and in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying. For example, the inclusion of LGBT posters on notice boards, discussions with parents about specific statements of welcome and respect for LGBT members of the school community, teaching the Social, Personal, Health Education (SPHE) resource, *Growing Up LGBT* and participating in LGBT awareness events are just some of the ways in which a school can address homophobic and transphobic bullying.

6.5.5 Prevention and awareness raising measures must also deal explicitly with cyber-bullying. The best way to address cyber-bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. Prevention and any awareness raising measures should focus on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. The school-wide approach and the role of parents as outlined in Section 6.3 is of importance in this regard. The prevention and awareness raising measures should also take into account the scope for cyber-bullying to occur as a result of access to technology from within the school.

6.5.6 A school's approach to tackling and preventing bullying should take particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN, should join up with other relevant school policies and supports and should ensure that all the services that provide for such pupils work together. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.

6.5.7 A school's prevention and awareness raising measures need to be appropriate to the type of bullying and take into account the age and gender of the pupils involved. Each school must work to raise the awareness of bullying so that all members of the school community understand what bullying is and how the school deals with bullying behaviour.

6.5.8 Schools could for example choose to have a staff day on the subject of bullying complemented by an awareness day for pupils and parents. An awareness day can help give the parents of a pupil who is being bullied the confidence to approach the school and also helps to send a clear message to the parents of a pupil who is engaged in bullying behaviour that they have a major responsibility in addressing their child's behaviour.

6.5.9 Teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives. There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Stay Safe programme at primary level, is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. The Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme at post-primary provides opportunities to explore and discuss areas such as human sexuality and relationships, which has particular relevance to identity-based bullying. Various other social, health and media education programmes can further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour. For example, the *Schools for Health in Ireland* framework provides guidance on developing a health promoting school.

6.5.10 There is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. In English, there is a wide range of literature available which could be used to stimulate discussion. In Civil, Social and Political Education (CSPE), the interdependence of people in communities at local, national and international levels is stressed. In Geography and History references to colonisation, exploitation and dictatorships could be used to illustrate the negative aspect of power. The work could be extended into many

other areas such as Art, Drama, Religious Education, and Physical Education. Co-operation and group enterprise can be promoted through team sports, school clubs and societies as well as through practical subjects. Sporting activities in particular can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression.

## Sample Education and 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 to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- 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.
- An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s).
- 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 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.
- Involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities 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 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 (every year).
- The implementation of regular(e.g. per year/per term/per month/per week whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention: annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars: annual or term or monthly student surveys; regular school or year group assemblies by principal, deputy principal year heads etc.
- 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.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell e.g.
  - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - Hand note up with homework.
  - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
  - Anti-bully or Niggle box?
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - Administer a confidential questionnaire once a term to all pupils
  - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
  - Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.

- The development of an 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 listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. GLEN [www.glen.ie](http://www.glen.ie); BeLonGto [www.belongto.org](http://www.belongto.org)

### **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. 2<sup>nd</sup> level Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme.
- School wide delivery of lessons on **Relational aggression** (Cool School Programme: A Friend in Deed), **Cyber Bullying** (#UP2US, Be Safe-Be Web wise, **Diversity and Interculturalism** Yellow Flag programme. The school should list every resource related to the ~SPHE curriculum, and make a list of supports
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary and post-primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- The school will implement the advice in “Sexual Orientation advice for Schools” (RSE Primary, see booklet).

### **Links to other policies**

- List 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, Attendance, Sporting Activities.

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 (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

### **6.8 Consistent investigation, follow up and recording of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)**

6.8.1 A consistent and clear approach to dealing with bullying when it occurs is essential to effective practice. This section provides guidance and direction for schools in relation to the need to use established intervention strategies and ensuring consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour.

6.8.2 A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.

6.8.3 In these procedures, the member of teaching staff who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying is referred to as the “relevant teacher”. At primary level, the relevant teacher will normally be the class teacher. At post-primary level, the school will determine, having regard to its own circumstances, which members of teaching staff have this responsibility.

6.8.4 The school's anti-bullying policy must clearly indicate the relevant teachers in its school. It is not necessary to specify the relevant teacher(s) by name in the policy so long as it is made sufficiently clear to all which teachers in the school have this responsibility.

#### **Established intervention strategies**

6.8.5 The *Action Plan on Bullying* published on the Department's website in January 2013 highlighted the importance of schools identifying and consistently implementing established evidence-based intervention strategies for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour and preventing its continuation.

6.8.6 There are various approaches and intervention strategies that might be used by schools. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour it is generally acknowledged that no one intervention works in all situations. International and national research also continues to evolve in this area and the effectiveness of particular approaches continues to be reviewed.

6.8.7 Each school must therefore decide on the intervention method(s) that are best suited to its own circumstances. In identifying the most suitable intervention method(s) for a particular school, it is important to research and understand both the techniques of intervention involved and the assumptions and rationale of particular methods. One of the recommendations in the *Action Plan on Bullying* is that a new national anti-bullying website will be set up and this will be a useful and ongoing resource for schools.

6.8.8 To ensure clarity among the entire school community about how bullying cases will be dealt with, the method(s) of intervention that will be used by the school must be specified in the school's anti-bullying policy.

#### **Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying**

6.8.9 School authorities must ensure that the school has clear procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying and that these are set out in the school's anti-bullying policy. The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach:

- (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; 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 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 (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;
- (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 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 must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at **Appendix 3** (See Section 6.8.10 (iii));  
(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**

6.8.10 The Board of Management must ensure that the school has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour and these 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 discussions 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) and (b) above, 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 as part of a continuum of behaviour**

6.8.11 It is also important to note that 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, the school's anti-bullying policy must provide for appropriate linkages with the overall code of behaviour and provide for referral to be made to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate. In cases where a school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) should be sought.

#### **Referral of serious cases to the HSE**

6.8.12 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".

6.8.13 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.

6.8.14 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.

### **Supports for pupils affected by bullying**

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

6.8.16 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 counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

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

6.8.18 Details of the school's programme for working with pupils affected by bullying must be set out in the school's anti-bullying policy.

### 6.8.9. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

**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.

#### **Reporting bullying behaviour**

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

#### **Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach (see section 6.8.9)**

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant)teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Parent(s)/guardians(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;
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher; it may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
- 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;
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 and Recording**

- 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;
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- 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.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s) guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

### **Recording of bullying behaviour**

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour as follows:-

#### **Informal pre-determination that bullying as occurred**

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. Consideration needs to be given to where the records will be made e.g. incident book. All incident must be reported to the relevant teacher.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

#### **Formal Stage 1 – determination that bullying as occurred**

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying as 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.
- The school in consultation with the relevant teacher should develop a protocol for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher.

**Formal Stage 2 – Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)**

**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**


**3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))\***

Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

**4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))\***

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

--

**6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) \***

Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**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**

--

**9. Details of actions taken**

--

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

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

**\* Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.

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. The school should first list behaviours that must be recorded and reported immediately to the principal. These should be in line with the school's code of behaviour.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. Due consideration needs to be given to where these records are kept, who has access to them, and how long they will be retained. Decisions around record keeping should be noted in this policy,

#### **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) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires
- Peer mediation where suitable training has been given.

The Procedures mention the following intervention strategies and reference Ken Rigby:

[www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/BullyingPreventionStrategiesinSchools.Ken Rigby.pdf](http://www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/BullyingPreventionStrategiesinSchools.Ken%20Rigby.pdf)

- The traditional disciplinary approach
- Strengthening the victim
- Mediation
- Restorative Practice
- The Support Group Method
- The Method of Shared Concern

**7. The school's programme of support** for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows; (see section 6.8.16 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

- 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 cares system
  - Buddy/Peer mentoring system
  - Group work such as circle time.
- If pupils require counselling or 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.

**The following Prompt Questions may be useful in considering this aspect of the policy:**

- Are there agreed appropriate monitoring and supervision practices in the school?
- Have bullying danger spots been identified
- Have parents and pupils been consulted in the identification of these danger spots?
- How will pupils, in particular senior pupils, be involved as a resource to assist in counteracting bullying? In this regard, has a mentoring/buddy system been considered?
- How will the student council and school clubs be involved?
- In relation to Acceptable Use Policy in the school are the following issues addressed:
  - Are all internet sessions supervised by a teacher?
  - Does the school regularly monitor pupils' Internet usage?
  - Have pupils been instructed to use only approved class accounts for email purposes and to use these only under teacher supervision?
  - Have pupils been instructed to access only those chat rooms, discussion forums and messaging or other electronic communication for a that have been approved by the school?

(Note that the Schools Broadband Programme has blocked all social networking sites on the basis that they waste time and take up too much of the bandwidth which is been provided for educational purposes only).

### 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 on any of the nine grounds specified, ie. 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.....

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. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request 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:.....  
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed.....  
Principal

Date.....

Date.....