Ballincollig Community School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Ratified Dec. 2022

Introduction:

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Positive Behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Ballincollig Community School has adopted the following Anti-Bullying Policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of Positive 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 and the findings of *Joint Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science in the report 'School Bullying and the Impact on Mental Health'. (August 2021)*

Ballincollig Community School strives to be an inclusive and caring community where everyone can feel happy, safe and secure. We endeavour to nurture qualities of mutual respect, courtesy, kindness, tolerance, understanding and responsibility.

Rationale:

In the report *'School Bullying and the Impact on Mental Health',* (August 2021), DCU Anti-Bullying Research and Resource Centre submission identifies the three main features of bullying as being *intentional, repeated and involving power imbalance*.

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;

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- - o encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
    - o 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-
    - o build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
    - o explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
  - Effective supervision 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.

The policy applies:

• During school time (including breaks)

• Going to and from school

• During school tours / school outings

• During extra-curricular activities

• Where an incidence of bullying occurs at a location, activity, function, or programme that is not school related but has infringed on the rights of the victim at school and/or has disrupted the education process.

Procedures:

Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

A student should feel able to report a bullying incident to any member of the whole staff they are comfortable approaching. Our Pastoral Team includes:

- Year Head(s)
- Guidance Counsellors
- Chaplain
- Principal and/or Deputy Principal(s).

A student can report a bullying incident by using one, or any, of the following approaches:

• Directly approaching a member of staff at any time.

• Contacting the Pastoral team. A student can address a specific member of the team if they feel more comfortable. A list of the members will be made available to students.

• Getting a parent to contact the school by ringing to make an appointment with a member of the Pastoral team.

• Participating in one or more positive behaviour strategies at any point during the academic year.

Strategies to Prevent Bullying

• Our Anti-Bullying Policy is an integral part of our Code of Positive Behaviour.

• Everyone in Ballincollig Community School has a duty to look out for any behaviour which can be deemed bullying (see Appendix 1). This includes parents/guardians and the wider school community.

• Supervision and monitoring of students' behaviour, in all areas of the school and the school grounds, and during all school activities in so far as is practicable.

• Positive behaviour activities are planned that raise awareness and prioritise anti-bullying interventions, including: *The Learner Voice Programme; 'Big Brother, Big Sister'; Meitheal team-building activities; Exploration Week with 6th classes and Induction week for first year students, guest speakers, drama groups.*

• School-wide awareness raising and training through *SPHE.ie; TENI; BelongTo; Pieta House Resilience Programme; The Fuse Programme (DCU); Internet Safety & Acceptable Phone Use (Dr Maureen Griffin)* on all aspects of bullying to include pupils, parents / guardians, whole staff and the entire school community.

• The provision of a 'Buddy System' (*Meitheal; Big Brother, Big Sister*) which provides support to incoming students promoting a culture of peer cooperation and respect.

• A series of events will be organised, relating to raising awareness of bullying and promote positive behaviour, for example the annual *Anti-Bullying Week and Friendship Week, LGBTQI+ awareness week.* It is recognised that outdoor and extra-curricular activities promote a positive school culture that can improve physical and mental health of students.

Links to Other Policies and to Curriculum Delivery.

This policy is consistent with our school's Code of Positive Behaviour. It links to the following Curriculum areas:

• SPHE & Wellbeing: the issue of bullying is dealt with in each of three years of Junior Cycle, including modules on emotional wellbeing, assertiveness skills, coping mechanisms, resilience, social skills and anger management. In Senior Cycle, it is covered under the Self-Management and Mental Health modules.

• UCC Bystander Intervention Programme for second level students. TY students are provided with the opportunity to complete this programme. Students will develop an awareness of the dangers of inappropriate inter-personal behaviours. These behaviours are inclusive of, sexual harassment, substance abuse and bullying. The Bystander Intervention Programme develops a young person's capacity, both individually and as a collective student body to support each other and effect positive change.

- Anti-bullying lessons are also taught by subject teachers such as

  - CSPE (Human Rights)
  - English (drama, poetry, texts)
  - MFL & Irish (Cyberbullying; Intimidation at school

  - Science (Respiratory system; Human Health: Factors that affect the circulatory system and the breathing system to include stress and anxiety – discuss ways to reduce stress and anxiety including friendship and inclusion)
  - RE: Modules are taught on disability, tolerance, culture, values and beliefs.

- A conscious effort is made by all staff members to address the issues surrounding bullying as they arise.

- Mindful of potential impacts of bullying on students, all incidents will be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

- All reported incidents of bullying to be noted on the *Bullying Incident Report* form (available on MS TEAMS)

Procedures to deal with incidents of bullying behaviour:

- Where the incident is deemed to be minor, a verbal warning will be given to the bully to stop the inappropriate behaviour, pointing out how he/she is in breach of the Code of Positive Behaviour and trying to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view. If deemed appropriate, parents may be contacted.

- If the behaviour persists, the Year Head and the parents/guardians of the victims and bullies will be informed. Thus, they will be given the opportunity of discussing the matter and will be in a position to help and support their children before a crisis may occur. Appropriate sanctions will be imposed, in accordance with both the Code of Positive Behaviour and the Anti Bullying policy.

- Appropriate personnel will have a discussion with all of the students involved in a bullying

incident.

• All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils involved.

• The alleged victim and alleged bully will be invited to write down any relevant detail. They will be spoken to and encouraged to solve the problem.

• Records will be kept of all incidents and of the procedures that were followed.

• Appropriate personnel will monitor progress of students involved in a bullying incident.

• If there is a serious incident, the matter should be reported to the Deputy Principal(s) or Principal, parents will be involved and appropriate sanctions applied.

• Where the incident is deemed to be more serious or on-going, the Principal should be informed immediately and the Principal will inform the Board of Management, if necessary.

• In certain cases, it may be necessary for the school to seek the assistance of external agencies such as NEPS, HSE social workers, community workers, Gardaí.

Sanctions

The following sanctions may be employed when deemed appropriate:

• Verbal Reprimand

• Informal/ formal detention(s)

• Issue behaviour/ report card as deemed appropriate

• Withdrawal of privileges

• Suspension

• Expulsion

Support for Students Affected by Bullying

BCS provides a programme of supports for students affected by bullying. This programme will involve the following elements:

• Students who have been bullied will be offered appropriate counselling and provided with opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem and build their resilience.

• Students who have been involved in bullying behaviour will be provided with counselling and opportunities from our Chaplain, Guidance Counsellors or an outside agency, where deemed appropriate, to help them to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. They will also be provided with appropriate opportunities to build their self-esteem.

• Students who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with their teachers and their parents and to avail of counselling where they feel it may assist them to cope effectively with what they have experienced.

Students will be monitored by the Pastoral Team, Year Heads and Teachers to ensure they are moving on from the bullying experience.

Presentations which are age appropriate will be organised from time to time throughout the school year. (Pieta House Resilience Programme)

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.

Staff Members will be made aware of the Anti-Bullying Policy to include procedures

documented within. The Policy will be available for all teachers in the Policy Folder (OneDrive) and on MS TEAMS.

Students affected by bullying will be flagged, without details, to staff, when necessary. Data gathered through the Anti-Bullying Form will be collated and analysed annually with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour and identifying issues requiring attention.

Anti-Bullying is a topic on the agenda of each Board of Management meeting. The Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management at each meeting setting out the following:

• the overall number of bullying cases reported

• confirmation that all cases referred have been or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

The Minutes of Board of Management meetings will not include any identifying details of the students involved.

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.

Policy Review

The Board of Management will undertake an annual review of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and its implementation in accordance with the procedures set out in Section 7.2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools using the checklist included here at Appendix 4 of this document.

The Board of Management will ensure that an action plan is put in place to address any areas for improvement identified by the annual review. 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.

Details of the review will be recorded in the minutes of the Board of Management' meeting that adopted the review and a record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, will be made available to the Patrons and the DES. In the case of the DES, it is appreciated that the Inspectorate will place a strong focus on the actions the school takes to create a positive school culture and to prevent and tackle bullying.

Communication of Policy

A copy of this policy will be provided upon request from the main office. It will also be published on the school website, on MS TEAMS and in the school journal

Signed: _Maura Moloney_ Signed: _Kevin Forde_
(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: _6/12/22_ Date: _6/12/'22_

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on

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Date of next review: _December 2023_

APPENDIX 1

Types of Bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

(1) Physical Aggression: This includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault.

(2) Damage to Property: Damage to personal property - bicycles, clothes, books, pencil cases and bags can be broken, torn, hidden or defaced

(3) Extortion: victims can be forced to hand over money or valuables or to steal for the bully.

4) Intimidation: this is where aggressive body language is used as a weapon, including the voice and a look.

(5) Isolation: Being deliberately isolated, ignored or excluded from group activities is bullying. It is usually set up by one person and is accompanied by notes, drawings, comments loud enough to be heard, groups giggling/ laughing when the victim is near.

(6) Name Calling: Persistent name calling directed at the same person, which hurts or humiliates is a form of bullying. Most refer to physical appearance or academic ability (both high and low)

(7) Racial: Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background

(8) Homophobic bullying, Gender identity and Sexual Harassment: Remarks of a suggestive/ sexual nature or about a person's sexual orientation are forms of bullying. Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation, taunting a person of a different sexual orientation, name calling e.g. Gay, Queer, Lesbian

(9) Cyber-bullying: the use of information and technologies such as email, phone and text messages, chatrooms , social media, group chats, creating social media profiles/pages and web sites, to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm another:

Sending offensive, cruel or threatening messages, emails, photos or video;

Making silent phone calls;

Posting malicious comments or pictures online or on social media;