



Anti-Bullying Policy

Ballincollig Community School

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 Ballincollig 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.

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

2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- A positive school culture and climate which-
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- Effective leadership;
- A school-wide approach;
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

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

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in **Appendix 1**

4. The relevant school staff for investigating and dealing with bullying in Ballincollig Community School are:

Year Heads, the Chaplain, the Guidance Counsellors and the Deputy Principals

5. Ballincollig Community School will make every effort, within resources available to it, to provide appropriate regular education/awareness for all its students on bullying, aimed at informing them of the meaning of bullying, the importance of telling/disclosing, their rights and responsibilities, what to do if bullied, the support/help that is available in the school and at discouraging and countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour. This will be achieved through existing programmes already being taught in the school eg C.S.P.E., S.P.H.E., RE, Pastoral Care, through a well disciplined and organised school and through encouraging students to treat one another with respect. The education and prevention strategies, including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying, that will be used by the school are outlined in **Appendix 2**

6 Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying

- 1 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);
- 2 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;
- 3 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;
- 4 Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
- 5 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;
- 6 It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;

- 7 Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- 8 Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- 9 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;
- 10 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; a report should be made on the Recording Sheet **Appendix 3**
- 11 If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually.
- 12 Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after being interviewed by the teacher;
- 13 It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
- 14 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;
- 15 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;
- 16 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;
- 17 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;
- 18 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 on the recording sheet **Appendix 3** and submitted to the Principal.

- 19 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:
- 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; and
 - d. Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
- 20 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;
- 21 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.

<p>22 The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows: See Appendix 4</p>

23 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.

24 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.

25 This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 5th March 2019.

26 This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

27 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 (or where none exists, 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 by: Una O'Donnell (Chair)

Review date: March 2020

APPENDIX 1

2.2 Types of Bullying

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

- **Physical Aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in ‘mess fights’, they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain. The situation will also be monitored in contact sports.
- **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: It may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.
- **Isolation/Exclusion and Other Relational Bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person’s attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: “Do this or I won’t be your friend anymore” (implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the “silent treatment”.
- **Cyber-Bullying:** This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social networks sites, e-mails, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person’s sexuality, appearance etc.

- **Name Calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g. size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.

- **Damage to Property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

- **Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

APPENDIX 2

Prevention Strategies to Combat Bullying in Ballincollig Community School.

- Policy will be referred to on Open Night.

- The Pastoral Care notice board will promote events such as 'Friendship Week', and list the support available to students who may require same.

- The use of the expertise of Guest Speakers. Example: Samaritans, Aware, Humourfit etc.

- New staff are made aware of how we approach bullying in our school. This ensures consistency in dealing with bullying issues as they arise. No excuse for any party to claim that procedures were not/could not be followed.

- The use of mobile phones has been banned during the school day.

APPENDIX 3

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	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of Incidents (Tick relevant box(es))

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

5. Name of Person(s) who reported the Bullying Concern

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6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (Tick relevant box(es))

Physical Aggression		Cyber Bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (Specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as Identity-Based Bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Travelling Community	Other (Specify)

8. Brief Description of Bullying Behaviour and its Impact

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9. Details of Actions Taken

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Signed: _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date: _____

APPENDIX 4

Supports for Students Affected by Bullying

- Students will be offered an opportunity to attend counselling provided by outside counsellors.

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

- SPHE, CSPE and RE will support awareness of the effects of bullying behaviour.

- The school will encourage students to discuss bullying behaviour they have observed.

- A Friendship week will be held annually as part of the effort to increase awareness.

- Presentations which are age appropriate will be organised from time to time throughout the school year.