**Ballythomas National School Anti-Bullying Policy**

**Introduction:**

The Anti‐Bullying Policy of Ballythomas National School was reviewed, revised and updated October 2022.

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 the 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.

**Rationale and Aims of the Policy:**

The School climate and atmosphere are created by the actions of everyone in the school. The behaviour of the adults in a child’s life, parents, teachers and others is a significant influence on how a child acts.

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 inclusive and welcoming of difference.

‐ Encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour – bullying is too serious not to report.

‐ Promotes respectful relationships between all members of the school community as detailed in the Code of Behaviour and the School’s Mission Statement. This includes pupil to pupil, teacher to pupil, Pupil to teacher, teacher to teacher and parent to teacher and teacher to parent.

 Effective leadership.

 A school‐wide approach and 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 and parents.

 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.

**What is Bullying?**

*Definition:*

*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.*

Bullying is a behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating. The following types of behaviour are included in bullying:

 Teasing/Taunting/Jeering/Name‐Calling/‘Slagging’.

 Gossiping maliciously.

 Isolating/Excluding an individual or group.

 Hitting/punching/shoving/kicking.

 Threatening/Intimidating (verbally or physically).

 Harassing.

 Damaging property.

 Extorting money/property.

Methods of Bullying:

 Contact or face to face bullying.

 Technological Bullying –

 Via Internet Cyber Bullying, Social Media, Mobile Phone.

 Identity Bullying, e.g. Homophobic/Transphobic/Racist/Ethnic Bullying.

 Bullying based on disability 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 will be dealt with under the school’s

Code of Behaviour.

However, 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.

**Who Deals with Bullying?**

All members of the school community, i.e. staff, parents and children are aware of what bullying is and the importance of reporting it. There are no innocent bystanders. Once an allegation of bullying is made it will be investigated by the relevant class teacher. Another staff member will be in attendance to record the interview (in accordance with best Child Protection Practice).

**Raising Awareness and Prevention of Bullying:**

The Christian message “To Treat Others as You Would Like to be Treated” could be our motto to prevent bullying in our school.

Strategies Currently in Place to Develop Positive Behaviour:

 Positive Behaviour is encouraged through rewards, e.g. stickers, stamps, prizes, etc.

 Certificates for kindness and inclusiveness.

 Each class has a Contract which emphasises the positive behaviour expected as agreed by children and class teachers.

 The children are reminded to always ‘TELL’ the supervising teacher if something is wrong. Parents and children are reminded

regularly of all the opportunities available to make a staff member/Principal aware of anything that is upsetting them.

 The Board of Management ensures that there is adequate supervision

and monitoring of pupils at all times during the school day. Staff are always vigilant and are aware of the serious nature and impact of bullying. Staff are also aware that any child can be involved in bullying. Official supervision does not start until 8.40 a.m. and parents are regularly reminded of this and asked not to let their child/children onto the yard before supervision begins.

Curriculum Policies and Procedures in Place:

 The Code of Behaviour.

 Religion Programme ‐ Grow in Love

 Child Protection.

 Acceptable Usage Policy for the Internet. Parents are reminded that it is illegal for Under 13s to be on Facebook/Instagram/Snapchat. Mobile phones are not allowed in school.

 The S.P.H.E. curriculum includes Stay Safe and Walk Tall which teaches

children how to deal with unwanted interaction with others.

 Drama/Circle Time

 The SPHE curriculum will be organised in time blocks and ‘Bullying’ will be dealt with in block sessions at various stages throughout the year. There will be specific, age‐appropriate lessons taught from the

‘Walk Tall’ and other appropriate programmes.

 Class/Assembly presentations by teachers and pupils will be focused for these weeks on anti‐bullying activities.

 Certain drama classes during the year will also focus on the feelings and emotions of the ‘bully’ and the ‘bullied’.

 In future, the class contract will include a specific anti‐bullying message and children will design charts/posters for outside and inside their own classroom to highlight anti‐bullying messages (Similar to the Shield Campaign). Parents will be informed of these.

We intend to organise Anti‐Bullying Surveys for the pupils after each block of lessons

delivered.

 It is imperative that children realise that ‘telling’ is not ‘ratting’ but is good citizenship and responsible behaviour. From now on there are no innocent bystanders. Bullying is too serious not be reported. We aim to become a ‘Telling School’.

 Children will practice saying ‘STOP’, ‘GO AWAY’, etc. (Stay Safe Message) and making the perpetrator of any negative behaviour against them aware of how they have made them feel and how they have been hurt. Through role play too it is hoped that children become more empathetic of what it’s like to walk in the ‘bullied’ person’s shoes.

 Friendship/Anti‐Bullying Week to be organised during the year also.

**Procedures for Dealing with Bullying:**

All allegations or complaints of bullying made by a child/teacher/parent or guardian will be investigated whether these incidents happen inside or outside school. The Board of Management would ask parents to come to the school as soon as they are aware of any issues to facilitate immediate resolution.

In all cases there will be two teachers investigating – the Class Teacher and another teacher to record unobtrusively.

All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and due regard to the rights of the children involved. The interviewing teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem‐solving approach when dealing with such incidents and so set a good example of dealing with conflict resolution in a non‐aggressive manner.

Interviews will take place outside the classroom. The usual who/where/why/when questions will be used. The children involved will be supported in dealing with pressures they might feel as a result of the interview.

**The aim of all investigations is to get a full picture of the incident, decide if**

**bullying has taken place and resolve the issues. Some instances of negative**

**behaviour will not be deemed bullying. Parents and pupils are required to**

**co-operate with the investigation.**

Sometimes there will only be two children involved – the perpetrator and the person who is allegedly bullied. In other situations there might be a group of children involved. All parties will be interviewed and/or invited to write their version of events ‐ individually at first and subsequently the group will be

interviewed together. (Children in Junior classes could draw a picture to show ‘what happened’). Sometimes other pupils who weren’t involved can provide useful information and will be asked to assist in the investigation – there are no innocent bystanders and bullying must be reported. Pupils who report

bullying are not getting others ‘in trouble’ but assisting the ‘bully’ to make the necessary change to his/her behaviour. Sanctions (if applicable) will be invoked in line with the school Code of Behaviour. Any disciplinary sanctions are a private matter between the pupil being disciplined his/her parents/guardians and the school.

If the relevant teacher does deem that bullying has taken place, the perpetrator will be asked to make a promise not to repeat that particular negative behaviour. This restorative approach treats bullying behaviour as a ‘mistake’ that can and must be remedied. The intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, and get them to see the situation from the bullied person’s point of view and ‘walk in their shoes’. It is necessary to reiterate how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will

stop. If the promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty. The perpetrator will also be asked to apologise to the child they have hurt and that will be the end of the matter.

The parents of the perpetrator will be contacted to make them aware of the situation and seek their help to support their child in changing his/her behaviour.

The parent, teacher or child who made the allegation is informed of the outcome of the investigation and advised if bullying did/did not occur. The detailed record of the investigation is retained in the School Office and if the behaviour doesn’t recur no further action is taken.

In situations where the bullying behaviour continues or the relevant teacher is not satisfied it has been addressed satisfactorily after 20 days, the relevant teacher must complete the formal DES Recording Template. The Board of Management will be advised at this point. The child will be asked to make a

further promise to change and their parents will be asked to sign it on this occasion and appropriate sanctions applied. If this written promise is also breached, it will be considered very seriously under the Code of Behaviour and a meeting will be convened between the child, his/her parents, the Principal

and the Chairperson of the Board of Management which can result in suspension from school and ultimately expulsion. All records of bullying will be retained in the School Office and the Board of Management advised of numbers of official Templates completed.

**If Child Protection concerns are raised during investigations they will be**

**addressed under the School’s Child Protection Policy.**

Where a parent is not satisfied that a bullying allegation has been dealt with in accordance with this policy they should be referred to the school’s complaints procedures. If the parent has exhausted the complaints procedures and are still not satisfied the school must advise them of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children. Regularly at staff meetings throughout the year the records of bullying will be discussed:

(i) To determine if any other awareness‐raising strategies should be

introduced.

(ii) To see if the process of investigation needs to be changed, amended

or improved upon.

**The School’s Programme of Support for working with pupils affected by**

**bullying is:**

 Raising awareness as listed earlier.

 Developing strategies for dealing with negative behaviour.

 Outside services will be contacted, if necessary, e.g. NEPS, CAMS, etc. to offer support to pupils in certain situations.

 Ensuring pupils that it is possible to change their behaviour and giving praise and encouragement to them on that journey.

 Organising opportunities to give increased responsibility to the bully and the bullied.

 Taking a firm ‘no tolerance approach’ for the bullying behaviour but the integrity of the person.

 Extra Curricular Activities

 Drama/sports

 Information on bullying incidents passed onto next year’s teacher.

**This Policy will be review at the first Board of Management meeting annually.**

## 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 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.

o Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, corridors o 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.

**Appendix 3** Ballythomas National School - Incident Report Form

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|  |  Staff- Member |   |

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Source of report: Parent  Pupil Survey  Other

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Name of Reporting Person: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Details of Alleged Incident**

 Time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Location of incident: Yard  Classroom  Corridors Cloakrooms  Toilets  Other

Targeted Pupil: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Alleged Perpetrator: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Behaviour Reported**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **General** Physical Aggression  Damage to Property Name calling Teasing/ Slagging        Writing nasty notes Writing nasty graffiti Extortion Intimidation Insulting or offensive gestures Giving “The Look” Invasion of personal space  | **Relational**  | **Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of Traveller community** Comments or insults about: Colour        Nationality Culture Social class Religious beliefs Ethnic / Traveller Background Exclusion based on above  **Homophobic and Transgender** Spreading rumours  Taunting  Name calling e.g. gay, lesbian,  faggot   Physical Intimidation Threat **Sexual** Unwelcome or inappropriate: Comments  Touching   |
| Malicious gossip Isolation and exclusion Ignoring Excluding from the group Taking someone’s friends away “ Bitching” Spreading rumours Breaking confidence Talking aloud so victim can hear The “Look” Use of terminology e.g. nerd/swot i a derogatory way |  |
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| **Cyber** Spreading rumours, lies or gossip       Sending nasty /disturbing messages Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight Posting personal information about another Posting confidential/ compromising info/images Purposefully excluding someone from an online group Silent telephone/mobile phone calls   |
| Abusive text messages    Abusive email Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook Abusive website comments/ Blogs / Pictures   |  |
| **Special Educational Needs Disability** Name calling     Taunting others because of their disability/ learning needs Taking advantage of “vulnerabilities” Mimicking a person’s disability Setting others up for ridicule   |

**Details of Incident**:

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**Action Taken in Response to Incident Report**

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

## APPENDIX 4 CHECKLIST FOR ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school’s anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school’s anti-bullying policy will be required.

 Yes//No

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| Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?  |   |
| Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents’ association?  |   |
| Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff , including new staff?  |   |
| Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?  |   |
| Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?  |   |
| Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?  |   |
| Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?  |   |
| Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?  |   |
| Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?  |   |
| Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?  |   |
| Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal’s periodic report to the Board?  |    |
| Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school’s handling of bullying incidents?  |   |
| Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school’s handling of a bullying situation?  |   |
| Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school’s handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?  |   |
| Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?  |   |
| Has the Board identified any aspects of the school’s policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?  |   |
| Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?  |   |

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Principal

**NOTIFICATION REGARDING THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT’S ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

To: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The Board of Management of Ballythomas National School wishes to inform you that:

* The Board of Management’s annual review of the school’s anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

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

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Principal