

Introductory Statement

This Policy was formulated by the Principal and Staff of Ballinure National School .
The Policy was passed to the Parents Association and to the Board of Management for their input and views.

1. Aims of the Policy

To raise an awareness of Bullying as a form, of unacceptable behaviour among all parties in our school.

To create a school ethos which encourages children to discuss and disclose incidents of Bullying Behaviour.

To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of Bullying Behaviour.

To develop procedures for identifying and recording Bullying Behaviour

To review our policy on an ongoing basis which should enable us to identify and anticipate in advance actions that may be required.

School Rules will state clearly the intolerance to any form of bullying., name calling, fighting aggression etc as defined in Department guidelines.

Parents will be made aware of the procedures in place and policies can be viewed on request /

2. Rationale

This Policy is based on the belief that every child has a right to education in a safe and caring environment, free of any type of Bullying.

The Department of Education and Science requires Schools to have a written policy on Bullying...involving and encouraging all members of the school community in developing.

Reviewing this Policy promotes partnership and ownership and implementation of a living Policy. . 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 Ballinure N.S 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.

This policy should be read in the context of the school's Code of Behaviour and existing promoting Positive Behaviour Strategies.

3. Best Practise

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;

At Ballinure N.S, we consider the following to be key elements of a Positive School Culture:

- We acknowledge the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment
- We acknowledge the uniqueness of each individual and their worth as a human being

- We promote positive habits of self- respect, self -discipline and responsibility among all its members.
- We actively prohibit vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour.
- We have a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity .
- We have the capacity to change in response to pupils needs
- We identify aspects of the curriculum through which positive and sustainable influences can be exerted towards forming pupils attitudes and values.
- We take particular care of 'at risk' pupils and uses its systems to identify needs and facilitate early intervention where necessary –thus responding to the needs, fears & anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner

Ballinure N.S recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships within the school community

- *We recognise the right of parents to share in the task of equipping pupils with a range of life skills.*
- We recognise the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying
- We promote habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities
- We promote qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among its members both in school and outside 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

b) Effective leadership

- The BOM has overall responsibility to ensure that this policy is effective, sustainable and measured. The BOM must ensure that accountability is of the highest standard and frequently appraise the outcomes of the strategies and measures contained within the policy
- The Principal of *Ballinure N.S* strongly influences attitudes and sets standards in relation to dealing with bullying.
- We as teachers act as good role models and do not misuse authority, but be fair, clear and consistent in their disciplinary measures.

(c) A school-wide approach

- A whole community approach to the problem of bullying is required and Ballinure School community comprises of management, teachers, non-teaching staff, pupils, parents/guardians
- Beyond the school community, bullying behaviour may extend to outside of school. Where this negatively impacts on a school - parents and pupils have a responsibility to support the school in helping to address the issue. This applies particularly (but not exclusively) to cyber bullying.
- The assistance of Gardaí, Tusla and Community Workers may be required in some cases.
- Collective vigilance is needed throughout the whole school/community sector to identify and deal with issues around bullying in a fair and equitable manner

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

- *Ballinure N.S* endeavours to put in place appropriate systems to ensure that ALL relevant members of the school community (parents, pupils, staff and the wider community) have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour as defined in this policy (*Section 2&3 of Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools*)

(e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies see section 5 of this policy, (including awareness raising measures) that-

- build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
- explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying;
- effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

- Staff members have a distinct responsibility to ensure that supervision of pupils in class is effective and consistent
- Supervision in playground areas must be managed and conducted effectively, with particular attention given to 'hot spots' or 'hot times' eg arrival & dismissal

(g) Supports for staff

- Regular discussion and review of policy and procedures is essential to support staff on a continuous basis
- All staff must have a uniform interpretation of what is expected in relation to bullying, how to identify possible bullying behaviours, how to manage disclosures and how to deal effectively with incidents of bullying within the classroom context
- Staff must be aware that supporting one another is a key aspect of prevention and new/inexperienced members of staff must be given every opportunity to discuss concerns and model best practice
- CPD in relation to Anti Bullying Strategies will be supported and encouraged for all members of 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.

4.What is Bullying?

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.

(see attached list of identified bullying behaviours) Appendix 1

5. Link To Mission Statement

**It is stated in our Mission Statement that it is our aim to nurture and promote positive self esteem among our pupils, to develop a respect for Humanity and an awareness of difference.
We aim to promote a positive school environment by placing a strong emphasis on praise and encouragement as being critical to the development of every child.**

Link to Other Policies.

S.P.H.E/ Promoting Positive Behaviour/ Code of Behaviour/Child Protection

Who is Responsible?

The relevant teachers/others for investigating and dealing with bullying in accordance with the Anti - Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools – section 6:7.6, 6:7.7 - are as follows:

- **Principal**
- **Deputy Principal**
- **Chairperson B.O.M**

7. Prevention Strategies

The following education and prevention strategies will be used – Stay Safe, R.S.E. Bucket Filling Philosophy, Something Wonderful Award , Golden Rule, Respect , Garda Talk. Whole School Ethos. Friendship Week . Bullying Awareness eg posters ,signs.

9. 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), caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant teacher will exercise her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;
- 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 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 her how she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get 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;

10 a .Follow up and recording

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of 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;
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s)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.

10. b.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 are as follows:

11.Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred

All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them.

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.

12. Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist 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/s should develop a protocol for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher.

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 2 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher must use the recording template attached to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- a) in cases where she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and
- b) All confirmed instances of bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

The recording template must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal.

Teachers records are retained in a secure space in the teachers classroom. All report templates given to the Principal will be retained in the filing cabinet in the Principals Office.

13. 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/guardian to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time /S.P.H.E
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing
- Implementing questionnaires

The Procedures mention the following intervention strategies and reference Ken Rigby; www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/BullyingPreventionStrategiesinSchoolsKenRigby.pdf

Ballinure N.S is committed to exploring these interventions further:

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

14- Supporting Pupils affected by Bullying.

- 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.
 - SPHE Lessons
 - Stay Safe Programme
 - Bucket Filling
 - NEPS programmes on www.neps.ie
 - Anti Bullying Week
 - Friendship Week
 - Buddy system
 - Care Team Support inc Social Skills Group
 - 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. NEPS will also be contacted for advice
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

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15. Points of Instruction for Pupils in counteracting Bullying

Pupils are made aware of the following points through informal day to day reminders. Messages are also fed through channels such as S.P.H.E, Daily Class Time, Religion etc

There is a zero tolerance policy to bullying in our school

Always tell some one

Every child may join in any playground game

Don't fight back, verbally or physically. Report Immediately Instead.

Be willing to listen to both sides

Say sorry, forgive and forget

16. Points of instruction for Parents in counteracting Bullying

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Request an appointment with the Principal/class teacher either by a verbal or written request.

Talk to your child about appropriate/inappropriate behaviour in class and in the playground.

Tell your child that rules are rules and are in place to maximise the safety and wellbeing of the whole school Community .

Explain that in every competitive game there has to be a winner and a loser and that the most important thing is taking part.

Bullying is not tolerated.

When an incident is dealt with, we move on and start again.

17.School Environment.

There are signs in place in the playground to promote positive,inclusive play.

Throughout the school there is an ethos of –Treat Others as you would like to be Treated ,this Golden Rule is displayed in the school .

We promote the golden rule and praise and reward kindness to others through Pupil of the week, Bucket Fillers, etc

We aim to focus on the positive behaviours always rather than the negative

18. B.O.M .

Will review this policy when necessary.

Discuss discipline issues as part of their agenda.

Be informed by the Principal of any relevant issues .

Decide on appropriate sanctions,actions

Act as a mediator when a situation has not resolved itself through in school intervention.Desired outcome will always be to find an acceptable resolution for all parties.

19.Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils.

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and Practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

- There are agreed supervision and monitoring practices in the school.supervision rota is displayed in the classrooms. Children are supervised from 9.10am and again from 3pm as they are being collected .
- Mobile phones are generally not permitted on school tours.
- Designated play areas in the playground to minimise accidental injury.
- Pupils will be involved as a resource to assist in counteracting bullying through a whole school approach to tackling Bullying.
- In relation to Acceptable Use Policy in the school the following issues are addressed:

Cyber

- **Denigration:** Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation
- **Harassment:** Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual
- **Impersonation:** Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name
- **Flaming:** Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight

**Special Educational
Needs,
Disability**

- Name calling
- Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs
- Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying
- Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.
- Mimicking a person's disability
- Setting others up for ridicule

Appendix 2- 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
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	yes
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	yes
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?	yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	yes
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	yes
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	yes
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	yes
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	yes
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	n/a
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?	n/a
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	no

Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	no
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	no
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?	N/A
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	N/A
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	no

Signed Pat Morrissey
25/03/2019
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed: _____
Principal

Date _____

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

To: _____

The Board of Management of _____ 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 31/01/2022 [date].
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed Pat Morrissey
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 31/01/2022

Signed Margaret Gleeson
Principal

Date _____