Ballymurn N.S

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Rationale:

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 Ballymurn National 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. Key Principles:

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. Defintion of 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 types of bullying.
- cyber-bullying
- 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 Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4. **The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:**
   - class teachers

5. <u>**Education and Preventative Strategies:**</u>

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyberbullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

- The school will utilise a range of education and prevention strategies to encourage good behaviour and discourage bullying. We will seek to develop a positive school culture in the following ways:
  - 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 and involve pupils in the development of these messages.
  - 'Catch me 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 Special Educational Needs (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. (Walk Tall Programme/Cyberschools.ie programme/ Webwise)

- 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 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 will actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.

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

- We will raise pupils' awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects, taking particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN will 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.

- We will use the elements of the SPHE curriculum which make 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 is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying.

- We will use 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 will be used to stimulate discussion. Similarly in Geography and History references to colonisation, exploitation and dictatorships

may be used to illustrate the negative aspect of power. The work will be extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama, Religious Education, and Physical Education.

- Good supervisory and monitoring measures will be put in place both to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour.

- The Board of Management will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that temporary and substitute staff have sufficient awareness of the school's code of behaviour and its anti-bullying policy.

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

6. Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyberbullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools)

The class teacher will have primary responsibility for investigating alleged cases of bullying. However, dependent on the seriousness of the actions involved, the class teacher may decide to involve the Deputy Principal / Principal in accordance with our Code of Behaviour.

Where an alleged incident of bullying involves students from a number of classes, the class teacher will liaise with the Principal/Deputy Principal to carry out the investigation. The primary aim will be to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).

1. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the class teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling.' It will 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. Non-teaching staff such as the secretary, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretaker, cleaner are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the class teacher. Where there has been a report of an incident during break time involving students in one class, the class

teacher will investigate. However, this does not have to be done directly after break. It may be more appropriate to get the class settled into school work and then investigate the issue. If a number of classes are involved, the teacher may liaise with Principal/Deputy Principal to help in any investigation.

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 may be resolved.

3. 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.

4. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example of dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

5. Incidents will generally be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

6. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.

7. Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.

8. Where appropriate, those involved will be asked to write down their account of the incident(s).

9. In cases where it has been determined by the class teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will 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 will give parents an opportunity for discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.

10. In cases where it has been determined by the class teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the Principal/Deputy Principal will be informed of the details of the investigation.

11. It will be made clear to a pupil engaged in bullying behaviour that he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

12. It will 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.

13. If appropriate, follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will 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.

14. 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 will be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template.

15. 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;

16. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, to the school' complaints procedures. (see Appendix 1). Please see Appendix 5 for practical advice for parents. If having exhausted these procedures the parent is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

7. Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

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 PostPrimary Schools) :

All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour is as follows:

(i)   The class teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of all reports of bullying, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same. If it is established by the class teacher that bullying has occurred, he/she will 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.

(ii)   The relevant teacher will use the appropriate template to record the bullying behaviour. This form will be passed to Principal. In cases where the bullying has been resolved the template form will serve as a summary of the investigation (see Appendix 2). However, where appropriate, additional notes and details will be attached to the form to retain on file, particularly in cases where the bullying was not resolved within 20 days of the initial investigation. A record of the completion of the form will be made on the student's record by the Principal. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in this recording template 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.

7. Code of Behaviour / Referral to Outside Agencies

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. Accordingly, instances of bullying will be dealt with in tandem with the school's overall code of behaviour. 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) or the Special Education Supports Services will be sought.

Serious instances of bullying behaviour will, in accordance with the Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, be referred to Tusla (Children and Family Services) and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

Where school personnel have concerns about a child they report the matter to the Designated Liaison Person. See school's Child Safeguarding Statement.

8. Support for Pupils

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying (both victims and those involved in bullying behaviour) is as follows:

- Provide opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience as per the Social, Personal, Health Education (SPHE) programme.

- Friendship/Anti-Bullying week (Held annually)

- NEPS programmes on www.neps.ie

- Encourage friendship and small-group team-building exercises focused on affected pupils.

- Close monitoring of pupils (those bullying and those being bullied) on yard in the weeks following an incident of bullying.

- Social skills and wellbeing groups may be formed where necessary.

- Follow up meetings with students on an ongoing basis following any incident of bullying

- Teaching and learning strategies within the school to allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-esteem.

- Referral where appropriate to external agencies e.g. Pieta House, NEPS
- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to report them to teachers.

9. 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.
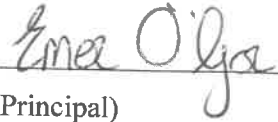
10. Prevention of Harassment

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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 11th February 2014 and most recently reviewed in February 2023. This policy is available to all members of the school community and is available on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the patron if requested.

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: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: 07-02-23

Date: 07-02-23

Date of next review: February 2024.

Appendix 1 - PARENTAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

Only those complaints about teachers which are written and signed by parents/guardians of pupils may be investigated formally by the board of management, except where those complaints are deemed by the board to be:

I. on matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education and Skills

II. frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school;

III. complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.

Unwritten complaints not in the above categories may be processed informally as set out in Stage 1 of this procedure.

Stage 1

1.1 A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, unless there are local arrangements to the contrary, approach the class teacher, by appointment only, with a view to resolving the complaint.

1.2 Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher she/he should approach the principal teacher with a view to resolving it.

1.3 If the complaint is still unresolved the parent/ guardian should raise the matter with the chairperson of the board of management with a view to resolving it.

Stage 2

2.1 If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further she/he should lodge the complaint in writing with the chairperson of the board of management.

2.2 The chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the teacher and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 5 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 3

3.1 If the complaint is not resolved informally, the chairperson should, subject to the general authorisation of the Board and except in those cases where the chairperson deems the particular authorisation of the Board to be required:

(a) supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint;

(b) arrange a meeting with the teacher and where applicable, the principal teacher with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 days of receipt of the written complaint.

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, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.

  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.

- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

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	
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

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 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 _____

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

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*?	Y
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	Y
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	Y
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?	Y
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	Y
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	Y
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	Y
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	Y
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	Y
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	Y
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?	Y
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	N
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	N
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	N
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?	Y
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	N
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	N

Signed _____ Date 07/02/23

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _Emer O'Gorm_____ Date 07/02/23

Principal

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

To: _STAKEHOLDERS OF BALLYMURN N.S._

The Board of Management of _BALLYMURN N.S._ 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 _7th February 2023_.

- 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 _____   Date _07/02/23_
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _Ema O'Gara_   Date _07/02/23_
Principal