

# Scoil Náisiúnta Baile an Tótáis



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## Anti-Bullying Policy

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 (BOM) of Ballintotas NS has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. The policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti bullying Procedures for Primary and Post -Primary Schools which were published in September 2013.

2. The BOM 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 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 whole 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, investigating and follow up of bullying behaviour( including use of established intervention strategies); and
- Ongoing 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 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: Cyber bullying includes (but is not limited to) communicating via electronic means with the objective of causing hurt, fear, embarrassment, humiliation, alarm and/or distress to one or more persons. Cyber bullying includes the use of mobile phones and the internet with the objective of upsetting someone. It may take the form of general insults or impersonation, defamation or prejudice-based bullying. While this policy addresses issues related to cyber bullying of students (i.e. situations in which one or more students are the victim[s] of bullying), the policy also applies to teaching and other school staff.

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 as 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.

**4. The relevant teachers** for investigating and dealing with bullying will normally be the class teacher. The Principal/Deputy Principal may step in if the class teacher is unavailable. Any instances of bullying in the yard will be reported to the class teacher by the teachers on supervision duty. Learning Support teachers, Resource teachers and SNA's will also report incidences to the relevant class teacher.

**5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) will be as follows:**

- Create a culture of "telling" by repeatedly reinforcing the message that if anyone is the victim of bullying behaviour, they should not retaliate in any way, but they should tell an adult. Victims should be reassured that if they tell, something will be done about the bullying in a safe manner and all reported incidents will be dealt with.
- Class lessons to be provided to enable pupils "how to tell" ( telling protocol)
- Bystanders can be the key to resolving bullying and if anyone witnesses bullying behaviour, they should always tell a teacher or another responsible adult. This is not telling tales but a means of protecting victims and a way of demonstrating responsible behaviour.
- **Measures re Cyber Bullying**
  - \_ Staff will endeavour to identify signs of cyber bullying and to keep informed about the technologies that children commonly use.
  - \_ Advice will be communicated to help students protect themselves from being involved in bullying (as perpetrator or as victim) and to advise them on reporting any incidents.
  - \_ Students will be informed about cyber bullying in the course of their education.
  - \_ Garda Margaret O Connell , Midleton visits the school regularly and talks to Rg5 and Rg 6 about cyber bullying.
  - \_ Teachers will dedicate a standalone lesson to deal with the issue of cyber bullying. These lessons will be age appropriate.
  - \_ Students and staff are expected to comply with the school's policy on the use of computers in the School. (Acceptable Use Policy)
  - \_ Parents will be provided with information and advice on cyber bullying.
  - \_ Parents and students are advised that it is illegal for a child under 13 to register with and use many social media networks, including Facebook, Instagram, and SnapChat.
  - \_ Internet to the school uses a filter which endeavours to block access to inappropriate web sites, apps etc.
  - \_ No pupil is allowed to use the internet in school, without a member of staff present.
- Smart devices such as mobile phones and tablet computers are banned from the school except on exceptional occasions .On these occasions, parents are asked to

notify the class teacher. These devices are switched off and handed to the class teacher or put into the secretary's office until the end of the school day.

- Identity based bullying such as homophobic bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the travelling community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs
- **Raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour by -**
- Displaying school's anti-bullying statement (Bullying is wrong and is not tolerated in Ballintotas NS. We are a telling school) in school foyer and other prominent places around the school environment and also by going over aspects of bullying whenever the whole school body is assembled. (What is bullying? What is not bullying? What to do if you feel you are being bullied? What to do if you see somebody else being bullied?)
- Engaging in formal teaching within the class setting through SPHE and RE programmes.
- Have a Multi- Cultural/ International day if the occasion arises
- Creating an awareness week during the first term for the whole school community about bullying. This will involve discussion, Stay Safe lessons on bullying, anti – bullying games, poster/slogan competitions, bullying surveys for classes 3rd-6th.This will be revisited each term.
- Formal programmes of work are a vital element in raising children's self-esteem and equipping children to cope with bullying behaviour e.g. Walk Tall, RSE, Grow In Love, Stay safe.
- Positive reinforcement by teachers in classroom setting (Golden time, spot prizes, stars, stickers etc.)
- Modelling of respectful behaviour and language by teachers and staff.
- Promotion of extra-curricular activities which encourage co-operation among pupils ( to extend this beyond sport).
- Rewarding incidents of good and improved behaviour and showing acts of kindness at class and whole-school level.
- Encouraging students to look out for each other and to be responsible for their own behaviour.
- All teachers are required to be vigilant on yard duty- record all incidences- monitor repeat offenders. Yard supervision will be reviewed regularly
- Immediate affirmation of children who report incidents of bullying which they have witnessed.

- Circle-time sessions, role-play, Socially Speaking programs, comic strips and puppetry are methodologies which are used to discuss and explore issues of bullying.
- To prepare a "quiet area" for circle time and other programs.
- Each class to have a set of class rules which compliment the school's Code of Behaviour.
- A "worry box" to be placed in all classes from 1st class upwards.
- A friendship/respect week to be held in February .
- The most current anti-bullying policy will be sent to parents who then must sign to say they have received this.
- Ensure supervision at all times when pupils can access the internet.
- Sanctions for unauthorised use of the internet/electronic devices will be imposed.
- All teachers will do a lesson on internet safety- to coincide with Internet Safety Day. An internet safety talk is given to Rg5 each year by a member of An Garda Siochana
- To focus on the topic of bullying on at least one school assembly ( Nov. of each school year as per the recommendations from Dealing with Bullying in Schools (Office of the Ombudsman for Children 2013).
- Senior students organise games and look out for the junior children to encourage co-operative play .
- A 'buddy system' will be put in place if teachers deem it necessary.
- Appropriate social skills programmes are used when deemed necessary by the Special Educational Needs (S.E.N.) teachers.

**6. The school's procedure for investigation, follow up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying are as follows:**

All reports of bullying must be dealt with initially by the relevant teacher.

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);

(ii) 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;

(iii) 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;

(iv) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

(v) 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;

(vi) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;

(vii) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;

(viii) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;

(ix) 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;

(x) 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;

(xi) 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;

(xii) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;

(xiii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);

(xiv) 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;

(xv) 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;

(xvi) 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;

(xvii) 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;

(xviii) 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 in the recording template(**Appendix 3**)

(xix) 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:

- 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; and
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;

(xx) 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;

(xxi) 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.

### **Procedures for recording bullying behaviour**

- (i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of those reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
- (ii) If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must 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. Class teachers will keep an 'incident report book' in which they will record any relevant misbehaviours which may reveal bullying patterns. Class teachers will keep colleagues informed.

**(iii) The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:**

a) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and

b) where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at **Appendix 3** must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

**7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:**

### **The victim**

Victims are reassured from the outset that they are not to blame.

- Victims parents are informed immediately
- Strategies for restoring self-esteem are explored between teacher and parents/guardians
- The relevant teacher will endeavour to assure the child that they are the victim and that they did the right thing by telling.
- The teacher will monitor the situation in the period after the bullying incident/s and regularly check with the child/children to see how things are going.
- Disciplinary measures will be taken as outlined below to prevent further bullying
- The Principal will follow up by checking in regularly on how the situation has progressed.  
Information re any past Bullying issues will be passed on to new teachers at the start of each year.

### **The wrongdoer**

- Disciplinary measures will be taken to prevent further bullying
- The parents/guardians of the wrongdoer will be informed
- The bullying incident will be discussed  
Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling. They may need to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. Empathy awareness needs to be developed.
- Clinical referral and assessment may be necessary.



- **Incidents of bullying can extend beyond the school** and the journey to and from school is one which can provide particular opportunities for bullying to occur. The school's policy could be given to those who are closely involved at this stage (e.g. the bus drivers, coaches) so that if bullying behaviour is witnessed by them, that they may report it to the school.
- In certain cases too it may be necessary to invite assistance from formal agencies such as Gardai, Health Board, NEPS etc.
- The school will constantly remind parents of the dangers of "cyber- bullying" as can happen with the use of social networking sites and mobile phones. We also direct their attention to the school's internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

#### **Disciplinary measures**

- Child/children in question will be spoken to by the class teacher and advised how to improve
- Parents/guardians of both parties will be informed of bullying behaviour
- Sanctions may include removal of privileges or removal from their peers
- If the bullying persists the parents involved will be asked to come into the school to further discuss the matter
- If no resolution is forthcoming and the bullying persists then the pupil's parents/guardians will be asked to appear before the BOM
- In extreme cases, suspension may be considered.

#### **Adult bullying of children**

Any complaints against a teacher or other adult at the school are handled under the CPSMA/INTO Complaints Procedure. A copy of this is available at the secretary's office.

#### **8. Supervision and Monitoring of pupils:**

The BOM 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 (see school's supervision policy)

#### **9. Prevention of Harassment:**

The BOM confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practical 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 Travelling community.

**Success Criteria:**

- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils
- Well-being and happiness of the whole school community in the light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered and fewer problems in the yard.
- Increase in numbers of children reporting

11. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_

12. This policy has been made available to school personnel and provided to the Parent's Association. A copy of the policy will be made available to the Department and patron if requested.

13. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the BOM 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 and provided to the Parent's association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and to the Department.

**Ratified by Board of Management on**

**05-04-2019**

**Date**

**Fr Eamon Roche**

**Chairperson, Board of Management**

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- **Anti bullying charter?**

Every pupil has the right to be free from bullying during his/her time in Ballintotas NS

- Our school will not tolerate any unkind actions or remarks, even if these were not meant to hurt.

- Any series of unkind actions or comments will be called bullying.

- Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological.

Pupils: Remember your CODE-

- Be Gentle

- Be a friend

- Tell about bullying

Say No.....Get Away.....Tell someone

### Parents

- Be alert to signs of bullying -of or by your child.

- Look for support

- Do not encourage your child to “give as good as you get”

### Teachers

We, the teacher, consider bullying to be a serious matter.

We are a telling school.

We recognise that the victim and bully need help

## Appendixes

### 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 behavior 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/schoolyard/outdoor supervision.

School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying "hotspots" and "hottimes" for bullying in the school. Hotspots tend to be in the playground/schoolyard/outdoor area.

### **Appendix 3 Report form**

### **Appendix 4 Incident report format to include date,pupils involved,incident .action taken**

### **Appendix 5 Checklist for annual review**