Anti-Bullying Policy - St. Brigid's National School, Ballysax

The school community of St. Brigid's N.S, Ballysax, believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, *(thereby protecting the person(s) being target*ed) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation involving members of the school community they should notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

Pupils' participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of St. Brigid's 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.

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

(a) 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;

The following are some practical tips for actions that will be promoted 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 ignored.

- ❖ 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 Parent Teacher 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.
    - Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.

    - 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.

(b) Effective leadership

(c) A school-wide approach

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

(e) 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;

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

(g) Supports for 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.

3. In accordance with the A*nti-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 o**f 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.

Examples of bullying behaviours - the following is a non exhaustive list

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	● Harassment based on any of the 9 Grounds in the Equality Legislation, namely gender including transgender, civil status, family status, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, religious belief, membership of the traveller community. ● Physical aggression ● Damage to property ● Name calling ● Slagging ● The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person ● Offensive graffiti ● Extortion ● Intimidation ● Insulting or offensive gestures ● The “look” ● Invasion of personal space ● A combination of any of the types listed
Cyber	● **Denigration: Sp**reading 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 ● **Trickery:** Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online ● **Outing**: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images ● **Exclusion:** Purposefully excluding someone from an online group ● **Cyber stalking:** Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety ● Silent telephone/mobile phone call ● Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls ● Abusive text messages ● Abusive email ● Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles ● Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures ● Abusive posts on any form of communication technology
Identity Based Behaviours .	**Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislatio**n (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community)
Homophobic and Transgender	● Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation ● Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation ● Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner ● Physical intimidation or attacks

	• Threats
Race, nationality, ethnic, background and membership of the Traveller Community	• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include: • *M*alicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The “look”
Sexual	• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
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

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

The Relevant Teachers in this school are:

- ❖ Class Teacher
- ❖ Principal
- ❖ Deputy Principal
- ❖ Assistant Principal II

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows

Education and prevention strategies

School-wide approach

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.

- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s).
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- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
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- Involvement of the students in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, mentoring, Yard Buddies and other student support activities that can help to - support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
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- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school, which includes the Golden Rules, to be in common areas of the school.
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- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and is made available to all parent(s)/guardian(s) as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (every year).
- The implementation of whole school awareness measures
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- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
    - ❖ Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
    - ❖ Note to teacher.
    - ❖ Comment Box
    - ❖ Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
    - ❖ Administer a confidential questionnaire to pupils as required.
    - ❖ Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to make an appointment to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.

- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school, which include Stay Safe, Be Safe Be Wise, Bullying in a Cyber World, Anti Bullying Programme, *W*alk Tall.
- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

Links to other policies practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying(remembering that most recent policies are current practice)

- Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Statement & Procedures, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance, Sporting activities.

Mobile Phones/iPods/ iPads and similar devices

- ❖ Personal Mobile phones, iPod, iPads and other similar devices are **not** allowed in St. Brigid's N.S. unless exceptional circumstances exist, in which case a note is required from parent/guardian and device must be handed up to teacher and will be returned at 3pm. Under no circumstances should these devices be kept in school bags/coats etc during a school day. The school accepts no responsibility for loss/damage/theft of devices.

- 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;

- 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, as per Code of Behaviour, are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.

Follow up and recording

- 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;
    - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s)s or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- 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.

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:

Informal-pre-determination that bullying has occurred

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. Records will be kept in child's class file.
- While all 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.

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 his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

Formal Stage 2

- The relevant teacher will use the recording template a**t Appendix A** to record the bullying behaviour and this will be reviewed within 20 school days. When the recording template is used, it will be retained by the relevant teacher in child's file.

6. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

The primary aim 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);

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach.
Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to a relevant teacher in the school.
- All reports 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;

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach (see section 6.8.9)

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant)teacher will exercise his/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 may be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved may be met as a group. At a group meeting, each member may 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(s)
- In cases 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 to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;

Intervention strategies may include:

- 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(s)/guardian(s)s to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing
- Implementing questionnaires
- Peer mediation where suitable training has been given

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

- 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.
  - Pastoral care system
  - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
  - Group work such as circle time

- If pupils require counselling of further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

8. 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. School policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying are

Code of Behaviour

Child Protection policy

Supervision of pupils

Acceptable Use policy (AUP)

Complaints Policy

Attendance, Sporting activities.

References:

Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools

*w*ww.antibullyingcampaign.ie- free classroom resources -exercise sheets and videos for class use

School Programmes - Stay Safe / Walk tall / RSE /Making the Links

9. 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.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 2*1/05/201*6

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

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the revie*w* 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)

Date: 21/05/18

Signed: Esther Reddy
(Principal)

Date: 21/05/2018

Date of next review: 2020