

# ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



## BALBRIGGAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Principal: Mr Emmet Sheridan

Reviewed Anti-bullying policy 9( inline with circular 10045/2013)

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 Balbriggan Community College 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 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;
- 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.**

**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.

**Examples of Bullying behaviours. This list is non exhaustive;**

**General behaviours which apply to all;**

-Harassment

-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
- Spreading of malicious rumours

### **Cyber ;**

**Denigration:** spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a persons 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 phone call/abusive calls/abusive text messages/abusive email/abusive communication on social networks or on any form of communication technology.

### **Identity Based Behaviours;**

Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in **Equality Legislation** (gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and member of the Traveller Community)

### **Homophobic and Transgender;**

1. Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation
2. Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation
3. Name calling eg Gay, Queer, Lesbian
4. Physical intimidation or attacks

## 5. 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;

\*Malicious gossip

\*Isolation

\*Ignoring

\*Excluding from the group

\*Taking someone's friends away

\*"Bitching"

\*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 including gifted students and disability:**

\*Name Calling

\*Taunting others because of their ability, learning needs or disability

\* 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.



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

**Principal**

**Deputy Principal**

**Year heads**

**Tutors**

**Care Team Personnel**

**Guidance Counsellor.** Any teacher must act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

**4. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows;**

**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.

-Whole 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

-Professional development with specific focus on training of the relevant teacher(s)

-School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying ,to include pupils, parents/guardians and the wider school community.

-Supervision and monitoring of classrooms ,corridors,school grounds, school tours and extra curricular activities. Non-teaching staff and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be more vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.

-Promotion of the Anti-Bullying code for the school to be included in student journals .

-The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and parents/guardians are given a copy .

-Encourage a culture of telling with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way students will gain confidence in "telling". 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 acting responsibly

-Ensuring pupils know who to tell and how to tell ,eg;

\* direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time

\* hand a note up with homework

\* get a parent /guardian or friend to tell on your behalf

\*ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if the witness or know that bullying is taking place

Implementation of curricula;

- The full implementation of the SPHE and CSPE curricula and the RSE Programmes.

- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes

- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying .

- Delivery of Garda SPHE Programme .

- 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 ;**

Code of Behaviour

Child Protection policy

Acceptable Use Policy

Mobile phone/Electronic Device policy

## **6.The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour:**

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 schools procedures must be consistent with the following approach.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils,parents,guardians )understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting Bullying Behaviour;

-Any pupil or parent /guardian May bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.

-Any reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.

-Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries ,SNAs,bus escorts, 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.

-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;

-Parents/guardians 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.

-All 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.

-If a group is involved ,each member should be interviewed individually at first.

-Each member of the group should be supported through the possible pressures they may face from other members of the group after the interview by the teacher.It may also be helpful or appropriate to ask those involved to write down their account of the incidents.

-In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred , the parents/guardians of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain 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 him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try 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 parents/guardians )that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents /guardians 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 the 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 parents/guardians 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/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with the bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent/guardian must be referred, as appropriate , to the schools complaints procedure

-In the event that a parent /guardian has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied , the school must advise them of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

#### **Recording of the 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.All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher.

-While all reports , including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated 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 the same

-The relevant teacher must inform the Principal of all incidents being investigated.

Informal 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 and restore , as far as is practicable , the relationships of both parties involved.

-The school in consultation with the relevant teacher will have a protocol for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher.

### **Formal Template;**

The relevant teacher will use the recording template from DES Procedures 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 where in certain circumstances 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.

### **7.The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :**

-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 eg,

#### **\*Pastoral care system**

- \* Buddy /peer mentoring
- \* Tutor/Yearhead system
- \* \*Care team/student support
- \* Group work

-If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with 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 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.

### **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.

1. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 13/3/24  
[date].

1. 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.

10. 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.

12. Signed: [Signature] Date: 13/3/24  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)  
Signed: [Signature] Date: 13/3/24  
(Principal)  
Date of next review: April 2025