

Bishopstown Community School

Anti-Bullying Policy

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Bishopstown Community 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.

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

(a) A positive school climate and culture which:

- Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity.
- Encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
- Promotes respectful relationships across the school community

(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:

- Builds empathy, respect and resilience amongst students
- Addresses bullying in all of its forms as defined below.

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of students

(g) Supports for staff

(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour

(i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

Bullying is not acceptable at Bishopstown Community School

In accordance with the **Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013**, Bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or a 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
- 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 message, do not fall within the definition of bullying and will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the schools code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once off offensive or hurtful public message or post, image or statement on social media or other public forum where that message / post, image or statement can be viewed and shared by other people will be viewed as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the schools code of behaviour.

Relationship to the School's Mission Statement:

'At Bishopstown Community School each individual is respected and valued for his/her unique qualities and abilities.

Our aim is to develop the whole school community so that we may be better able to realise to the full of our potential as individuals and as active members of society.

The Aim of this anti-bullying policy is to help create the positive environment in which each individual will be respected, valued and helped to realise his/her full potential.

We recognise that bullying behaviour is directly opposed to and obstructs our efforts to live out the values expresses in our mission statement.

Types of bullying behaviours:

General behaviours

- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 i.e. Gender, Marital Status, Family Status, Age, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Race, Religion and 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 / Online Behaviours

- **Denigration:** Spreading rumours, 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
- **Tricking:** Fooling someone into sharing personal information which is then posted 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 calls
- Abusive phone calls
- Abusive text messages
- Abusive email
- Abusive communication on social media
- Abusive website comments / blogs / pictures
- Abusive posts on any form of communications technology

Homophobic and Transphobic behaviours

- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation or gender identity
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation or gender identity
- Name calling that is used in a derogatory manner
- Physical intimidation or attacks
- Threats

Behaviours based on 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 behaviours

This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:

- Malicious gossip
- Isolation and 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 Behaviours

- Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching
- Sexual Harassment

Behaviours relating to Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Disability

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

Indicators of Bullying Behaviour

The following signs and symptoms may suggest a student is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to/from school e.g. requesting that parents collect him/her, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to/from school
- Unwillingness to go to school or school refusal
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school
- Pattern of physical illnesses e.g. headaches, stomach aches
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school, after weekends or after school holidays
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g. stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty sleeping, vomiting, bedwetting

- Spontaneous out of character comments about students or teachers
- Possessions missing or damaged
- Increased requests for money or stealing money
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is bothering him/her

There may be other signs depending on the individual and his/her circumstances. The above signs do not necessarily mean that a student is being bullied but if repeated or recurring in combination, these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the student.

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

Year Heads, Class teachers or Key Person supported by the Student Support Team and the school's Code of Behaviour.

Note: Any teacher can act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

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:

- **The Code of behaviour**
- **ICT Acceptable Use Policy**
- **The SPHE and RE syllabi**
- **The Student Council**
- **Peer Mentoring**
- **Course content in a variety of subjects, which fosters respect and inclusion**
- **Extra-Curricular activities**
- **Guest Speakers**
- **Student Council**
- **Lunchtime activities**
- **Trend Micro Cyber-safety programme**
- **Stand-up week**
- **Gratitude week**
- **World Religions Week**
- **Intercultural week**
- **Celebrating student achievement.**
- **Kindness Programme (1st Year)**
- **Wellbeing Week**
- **Shine Positive Mind-set Workshop (5th Years)**
- **Hidden Heroes Award**
- **Alert Programme**
- **Getting it Together Programme**

Education and Prevention Strategies

School-wide approach

- A school-wide approach to fostering respect for all members of the school community
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice, stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour
- The fostering and enhancing of student's self-belief through both curricular and extra-curricular activities. Students 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 develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on students' lives and the need to respond to it through both prevention and intervention e.g. FUSE anti-bullying programme
- Professional development focusing specifically on the training of relevant teachers
- Whole school awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying to include students, parent(s) / guardian(s) and the wider school community
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours, extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and to report issues to the relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student's use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) within the school. (For full details see schools Acceptable usage policy)
- Involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe school environment, e.g. peer mentoring system, lunchtime clubs and any other student support activities that can help to support students and encourage a culture of peer respect
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with students and all parent(s) / guardian(s) are made aware of the policy through the school website
- The organisation of regular whole school awareness measures such as friendship week
- Encourage a culture of talking and trust, ensuring students know who to tell and how to tell about bullying incidents, such as:
 - Directly approaching a teacher
 - Handing a note to a teacher
 - Asking a parent / guardian to report an incident
- Parent(s) / guardian(s) are encouraged to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied

Implementation of the Curriculum

- Anti-Bullying education is delivered in the school through the full implementation of the SPHE, CSPE and Religious Education Curricula
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes as well as other specific Anti-Bullying Programmes e.g. FUSE anti bullying programme

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:

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. The school uses restorative practice in this regard.

Note: The use of restorative practice does not override the schools Code of Behaviour and any serious breach, including incidents of bullying behaviour can be dealt with accordingly.

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved, including students, Parent(s) / guardian(s) understand this approach from the beginning of any investigation.

Reporting Bullying Behaviour

- Any student or parent(s) / guardian(s) can bring an alleged bullying incident to any teacher in the school. The bullying incident is then brought to the attention of the relevant Year Head / Class Teacher who will investigate and inform the Principal / Deputy-Principal
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher
- All teaching and non-teaching staff including Special Needs Assistants, Caretaker, secretaries and cleaning staff must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to the to the relevant Year Head / Class Teacher./ Key Person

Investigation and Dealing with Bullying Incidents

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the Year Head / Class Teacher / Key Person 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 students are required to cooperate fully with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is possible, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible
- The investigating Year Head / Class Teacher / Key Person should use a calm and problem solving approach
- All incidents should be investigated outside the classroom to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all students involved. Students who are not directly involved (bystanders) can also provide useful information in this way
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the Year Head / Class Teacher / Key Person should seek answers to questions of who, what, where, when and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-confrontational manner

- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved may be met as a group. If a group meeting takes place, each member should be asked for his / her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the Year Head / Class Teacher / Key Person. In some cases it may be appropriate to ask members of a group to write their statement down to avoid pressure from other group members
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant Year Head / Class Teacher / Key Person, that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s) / guardian(s) of the parties involved should be contacted as soon as possible 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 support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the students
- Where the Year Head / Class Teacher / Key Person has determined that a student has 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 students being bullied
- It must also be made clear to all parties involved (student(s) and parent(s) / guardian(s)) that in any situation where sanctions through the school's code of behaviour policy are required, is a private matter between the student receiving the sanction, their parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school

Follow up and Recording

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately addressed the Year Head / Class Teacher / Key Person 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 possible
 - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is possible
 - Any feedback from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal / 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 student who has been bullied is ready and agreeable
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be referred, as appropriate to the Principal / Deputy Principal

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. All incidents must be reported to the relevant Year Head / Class Teacher / Key Person
- While all reports including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the Year Head / Class Teacher / Key Person, the Year Head / Class Teacher / Key Person must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved
- The relevant teacher must inform the Principal / Deputy Principal of all incidents being investigated

Informal determination that bullying has occurred

- If it is established by the Year Head / Class teacher / Key Person that bullying has occurred, the Year Head / Class teacher / Key Person must keep appropriate records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore as far as is possible the relationships of the parties involved
- The Year Head / Class Teacher / Key Person should store the relevant written records

Formal Recording (From DES Procedures)

The Year Head / Class Teacher / Key Person must use the recording template attached (Appendix 1) to record bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- 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 has occurred

The schools code of behaviour lists behaviours that are unacceptable and should be dealt with in line with the school code of behaviour.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained in the students file in the Deputy Principals office.

Established Intervention Strategies

- Class Teacher / Year Head / Key Person interviews with all students involved
- Negotiating agreements between students and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured Restorative Practice process
- No blame, calm, solution focused approach
- Working with parent(s) / guardian(s) to support school interventions

The school's programme of support for working with students affected by bullying is as follows:

- All in school supports and opportunities will be provided for students affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise self-belief, to develop friendships and build resilience e.g.
 - Interventions through the student support team
 - Peer mentoring
 - Year Head / Class Teacher / Key Person Support
- If students require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to provide this support either in school through the Guidance Counsellor or will endeavour to liaise with the relevant outside agencies to organise same

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.

Prevention of Harassment

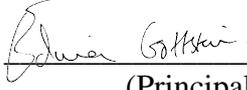
The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. 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 21st October, 2021 [date].

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.

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: 21/10/2021

Date: 21/10/2021

Date of next review: Oct 2022

Appendix 1 Template for Recording bullying Behaviour

1. Name of student being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of student(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))

School Grounds	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

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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 _____

