Scoil Bhríde N.S.
Ballyboy

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

To: <u>Patron, Parents & Staff</u>

The Board of Management of <u>Scoil Bhríde</u> 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 26/09/2023.

○ 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 ___Catherine Buckley.___   Date __26/09/2023.__
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed :___Grace Clendennen___   Date __26/09/2023__
Principal

Scoil Bhríde N.S.
Ballyboy

School Position on Bullying

School Position on Bullying

**Ballyboy,
Kilcormac,
Co. Offaly
R42 Y840**

**Website: ballyboyns@weebly.com
Roll Number: 18399K
Patron Catholic Diocese of Meath: Bishop Tom Deenihan**

Anti-Bullying Policy

**School Position on Bullying
In Scoil Bhríde, Ballyboy.**

The Scoil Bhríde school community believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore, it does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the well-being of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

An 'Anti-Bullying Team,' made up of staff members, exists to cultivate an environment free from bullying.

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, (*thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted*) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using a "Reform, not Blame" approach.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, in or outside the school, 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.

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Anti-Bullying Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy of Scoil Bhríde

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Anti-Bullying Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000* and the code of behavior guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behavior. 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 recognizes 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 behavior:
   - 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 behavior 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 behavior (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going 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 follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behavior, 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 behavior 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 behavior, 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 behavior.

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 behavior.

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

This definition includes a wide range of behaviour, whether verbal or written, whether physical or social, whether targeting person or property, whether carried out directly or indirectly or through any electronic or other medium, which could harm a pupil or undermine her/his self-esteem or self-confidence.

Appendix 1 gives a list of specific examples of bullying behaviour. This list is not exhaustive.

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 in this school is/are as follows:
   - Ms Sinead Grimes   for   Junior Infants
   - Ms. Therese Grennan   for   Senior Infants
   - Ms. Michelle Grimes   for   1st/2nd Class,
   - Ms. Emily O'Connor   for   3rd/4th Class,
   - Ms Michelle Egan   for   5th/6th Class

   ("*At primary level, the relevant teacher will normally be the class teacher.*" Procedures 6.8.3).

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying) used by the school are as follows:
   - The anti-bullying module of the SPHE programme as it applies during each school year,
   - At least five awareness-raising exercises per school year for each class group (*e.g. from the "Awareness-Raising" strand of the Anti-Bullying Campaign, via its website*), pro-actively explaining the nature and variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying.

     - Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take.
     - Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.
     - Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour, either spontaneously or through questionnaires that are regularly used in the school.

   Through presentations or other exercises, the school staff and parents/guardians are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied. They are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the "Relevant Teacher" (in the case of staff members) or any staff member (in the case of parents/guardians).

   Through regular reports in school newsletters and other communications as well as at meetings with parent/guardian groups parents/guardians are regularly informed of the activities of the school 'Anti-Bullying Team' and encouraged to support its work.

6. 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, (e.g. the six step approach available from the "Dealing with Incidents" section of the Anti-Bullying Campaign website) are as follows:
   - The 'Relevant Teacher' investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, whether these take place within the school or outside it, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end.
   - The School, through the 'Relevant Teacher' reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened, as part of an investigation. This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.

- Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the 'Relevant Teacher' to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it. In the event that they have been involved in bullying behaviour they are asked to sign a binding promise that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s).

- The 'Relevant Teacher' does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a "mistake" that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. Pupils who report bullying therefore are not getting others "in trouble" so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continued.

- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information.

- If a pupil has signed such a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a "mistake." In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed and requested to countersign their daughter/son's promise. Breach of this additional promise by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities (See sanctions below).

- All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school.

- Sanctions:

  Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that promise, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:

  - S/he may be required to sign another promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian;
  - Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be contacted by the 'Relevant Teacher' and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured;
  - Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the 'Relevant Teacher' and the principal and the pupil may be suspended from school.
  - The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be expelled from the school.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:
   - Bullied pupils:
     - Ending the bullying behaviour,
     - Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
     - Changing the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,
     - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme,
     - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,

- After resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a victim-impact statement,
- Making adequate counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner,
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).
- Implementing a "buddy system" in the school (*if applicable*),
- Bullying pupils:
    - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a "clean sheet,"
    - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honorable thing and giving them praise for this,
    - Making adequate counseling facilities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,
    - Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
    - Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
    - In dealing with negative behavior in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
    - In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a "clean sheet" and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

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. The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps as 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 in September 2019 and reviewed in June 2021, September 2022 & September 2023.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to 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 review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.

Signed: *Catherine Buckley.*

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed *[signature]*

(Principal)

Date: 26/09/2023

Date: 26/09/2023

Date of next review: September 2024

Appendix 1

Bullying can take a number of forms. These may include any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • 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**: Spreading 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 Legislation
(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: • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • 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"
	• Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way
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