**Anti- Bullying Policy Ballylanders N.S. 2021**

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 Ballylanders 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;

**(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;

**(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**

**(g) Supports for staff**

* Communications Policy
* Grievance Procedure Policy
* Access to Spectrum Life and I.P.P.N support service
* Enhanced Staff training in mindfulness and Well Being as provided by the B.O.M.

**(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 *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.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. The following are types of bullying behaviour that can occur*

**Relevant Teachers**

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

All class teachers

Deputy Principal

Principal

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

Ballylanders N.S. adopts a **school-wide approach** to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community. The promotion of the value of diversity is to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlighting the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

• Creating a **culture of telling**

* The staff of Ballylanders N.S. repeatedly reinforces the message that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported. Reassurance is given that all incidents of bullying will be dealt with in a safe manner. Pupils will gain a confidence in telling, which is of vital importance.
* Bystanders can be the key to resolving bullying. 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, eg.-
* Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class. –
* Hand note up with homework.
* Ask a parent(s)/guardian(s) to tell on your behalf.
* Ask a friend/peer to tell on your behalf.
* Administer a confidential questionnaire.
* Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place

**Supervision and monitoring**:

* Effective supervision and monitoring systems facilitate early intervention.
* Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, hall, playgrounds, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities.
* Non-teaching staff encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. o Supervision also applies to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.

**Professional Development:**

* 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 the training of the relevant teacher(s).

**Raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour by:**

* The development of dedicated display boards and posters in the school promoting friendship and bullying prevention.
* Holding a competition in which students create an anti-bullying slogan for our school. This will be displayed around the school.
* Displaying the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy in classrooms, common areas of the school see appendix 4.
* The anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and is also available on the school’s website.
* Anti-Bullying week held in Ballylanders N.S.

**Promoting a positive sense of self-worth and building empathy and resilience in pupils**:

* Extracurricular activities available for all pupils.
* Formal and informal interactions.
* Development of Buddy Programmes in order to help support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
* Development of the use of a Friendship/Buddy Bench.
* Fun Friends Programme targeted at a class level each year.

**Cyber bullying:**

* Promoting awareness of Ballylanders N.S. Acceptable Use Policy and ensuring that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.
* Communicating the message that unlike other forms of bullying, a once-off posting can constitute bullying.
* Advice will be communicated to help students protect themselves from being involved in bullying and to advise them on reporting any incidents. A telling atmosphere is created, so that pupils will report cyber bullying where they see it.
* Publicising ways of dealing with cyber bullying in the school. - Don’t reply. - Keep the message. - Block the sender. - Tell someone you trust.
* Promoting ‘Internet Safety Day’ annually and activities to celebrate this awareness.
* Teaching of lessons to deal with the issues of cyber bullying and internet safety.
* Gardaí will visit the school to talk about cyber bullying.
* Parent(s)/guardian(s) of children to be mad aware of ‘A Parents’ Guide to a Better Internet’, published by Webwise.
* Parent(s)/guardian(s) and students are advised that it is illegal for a child under 13 to register with and use many social media networks.

Our school’s approach to tackling and preventing bullying takes particular account of the needs of pupils with **SEN**, and joins up with other relevant school policies and supports and will ensure that all services and supports and will ensure that all the services that provide for such pupils work together. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils for pupils with SEN include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.

Initiatives and programmes focused on developing pupils’ awareness and understanding, including its causes and effects, will deal with explicitly with the issue of **identity-based** bullying. Where issues of identity-based bullying arise, the school will deal with them at an individual, group, class, or whole school context in consultation with the parents/guardians 5 of the children involved. The ethos of the school and the age and stage of the children’s development will be taken into consideration.

**Implementation of the curricula**

* Teachers influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives. There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness.
* SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.
* The Stay Safe programme is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children’s self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. This content is also shown in Cuntas Míosúil.
* RSE aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.
* Other resources and programmes include: PDST Anti-Bullying Support Material, Prim-Ed Cyber Bullying Packs, Web wise Cyber Bullying Pack, Web wise My Selfie Lessons, Fun Friends, Friends for Life and the Walk Tall 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:**

The school policies which support the Anti-Bullying policy are:

* Code of Behaviour
* Child Protection Policy
* Supervision of pupils
* Acceptable Use policy
* Remote Teaching and Learning Policy
* Attendance
* RSE Policy
* SPHE Policy
* DEIS plan

**Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying**

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 (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools)

**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 any teacher in the school.
* All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
* Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (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:**

* 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 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;
* 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 may 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 will afford parent(s)/guardian(s) the opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support 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 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 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
* 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(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**

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

1. 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
2. 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.

* When the recording template **Appendix 3** is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal.
* The relevant teacher may consult with the Principal or Deputy Principal at any stage in relation to a case.

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

(see Section 6.8.16 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 e.g.
* Circle Time activities
* SPHE Programmes e.g. Walk Tall, Zippy’s Friends,
* NEPS – Friends For Life, Incredible Years, Fun Friends .
* Play / Art Therapy
* The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
* If pupils require counselling or 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 relevant teacher.

8. **Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

The Board of Management confirms that an appropriate supervision policy and supervision 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.

10. This policy was reviewed and updated by the Board of Management on 20th May

2021.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel and is published on the school website. It is also available on request. 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 review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and is available on request. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed:      Margie O’ Donnell

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date:  20/05/2021

 The full policy including appendices is available from the office on request.

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Ballylanders N.S.

1st Sept. 2022

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We attach our revised Anti- Bullying policy. Please read it & return the section below only to the school.

Regards Sheila.

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Please sign & return this section only.

Child’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* I have read the school’s Anti-Bullying policy.
* I support the implementation of this Anti-Bullying policy

Signed:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Parent/ Guardian

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_