



Ballinahinch N.S

Anti-Bullying Policy

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, bullying of any kind is not tolerated. Every report of bullying is treated seriously.

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 Scoil Náisiúnta Baile na hÍnse has adopted the following **anti-bullying policy** within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. The 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 nonthreatening 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;
 - 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.

3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools September 2013* **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.

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 September 2013*.

4. The **relevant teachers** for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:
- Class Teacher: deals with the initial allegation/suspicion of bullying behaviour.
 - Principal (Mr Shane McGrath): where bullying behaviour is suspected by the class teacher the principal should be informed.
 - Deputy Principal (Mrs Joan Martin): is responsible for formulating the Behaviour Support System (Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy & Supervision Policy)¹

¹ Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools September 2013

5. **The education and prevention strategies²** (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be 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).
 - an awareness on the part of staff of the extremely serious nature of bullying and the severe consequences that may result in situations where it is not addressed.
 - a recognition by staff of the fact that any student can be the victim of, or perpetrator of bullying behaviour.
 - regular reminder in class of our school ethos where pupils and staff reflect on the importance of a positive school climate, where each individual is respected and where the development and preservation of self-esteem is valued.
 - Preventative strategies include staff vigilance and a comprehensive SPHE plan in every class.
 - a school approach to discipline which reflects the fact that pupils model their behaviour on adults and which therefore employs techniques such as positive motivation and recognition as opposed to methods based on threat and fear.
 - raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour through curricular initiative in areas such as novel exploration, drama, co-operation and the control of aggression.
 - comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures are in place through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation. This includes before and after-school supervision as well as separate infant, middle and senior yard areas for supervised play times.

² Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools September 2013

6. To **implement this policy** effectively we hope to raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils and parents/guardians

Responsibilities of School Staff

- To acknowledge that bullying is a shared responsibility within the school.
- To draw upon Restorative Justice practices, taking into account the age of the pupils involved. To implement prevention and intervention strategies, which build and maintain a safe learning environment for the whole school community.
- To empower students to deal with conflict in constructive ways using Restorative Justice practices.
- To take a pro-active stance regarding bullying by conducting class surveys (anonymous) asking pupils if they have been bullied; if they have seen anyone being bullied; if so, who, when, what was done, where and by whom?
- To take all reports of bullying seriously and to inform the Principal that an allegation of bullying is being investigated.
- To document any serious bullying incidents using the 'Bullying Incident Report Form', which is then sent to the Principal.

Responsibilities of pupils

- To show consideration, respect and support towards others.
- To be able to identify bullying behaviour.
- To not bully others.
- To tell if they are being bullied, or if they see someone else being bullied.
- To engage in responsible reporting when witnessing or experiencing bullying behaviour.
- To feel empathy for targeted members of the school community and, as a result, take safe and sensible action as a bystander.

Responsibilities of Parents

- To support the school in the implementation of the policy.
- To watch out for signs that their child may be being bullied.
- To speak to the class teacher if their child is being bullied or they suspect that this is happening.
- To instruct their children to tell if they are bullied or if they have seen other students being bullied.
- To notify the school if they think that their child is displaying bullying behaviour and to work with the school in addressing this problem.
- To never directly approach a student or the parent of a student at the school to intervene in behavioural issues.

7. Scoil Náisiúnta Baile na hÍnse will promote a **preventative approach** to bullying by implementing the following:

- Developing a whole school Anti-Bullying Policy in collaboration with the whole school community of all staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management.
- All teachers will implement the Social, Personal & Health Education (S.P.H.E.) programme; this includes the Stay Safe, Walk Tall and Alive-O programme.
- A copy of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour will be given to the parents of the incoming pupils. Parents will be informed that enrolling their pupil in Scoil Náisiúnta Baile na hÍnse will be regarded as accepting the contents of both policies in full.
- The revised policy will be circulated to all current parents.

The following anti-bullying initiatives will take place in the school annually:

- Each class will devise classroom rules at the beginning of each year which will promote inclusion, acceptance of difference and respect for one another. Children will sign their acceptance of the Class Code.
- Lessons which deal specifically with bullying will be undertaken in each class, with an emphasis on openness and discussion in this area. (Areas covered will include - What is bullying? Forms of bullying Cyber-bullying. Why do people bully? Bystander bullies, Silent witnesses, Effects of bullying. How does bullying make me feel? What can we do? Preventing bullying, Coping with bullying etc.).

The whole school community will be encouraged to become a 'reporting school' whereby everyone is encouraged to report/speak out if they are being bullied or if they witness a bullying situation. (When children inform a teacher of a 'bullying situation' which occurred outside of school time, the teacher will advise the child to inform his/her parents. The child will be encouraged to ask for their support in resolving the situation). Staff will take a pro-active stance regarding bullying by conducting class surveys (anonymous) asking pupils if they have been bullied; if they have seen anyone being bullied; if so, who, when, what was done, where and by whom? These will be carried out intermittently throughout the school year.

Discussion of the underlying principles of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour will occasionally form part of agenda of staff meetings.

- Where the opportunity arises and in conjunction with the Parents' Association, guest speakers with an expertise in the area of bullying-prevention, will be invited to address pupils, staff and parents.

8. Scoil Náisiúnta Baile na hÍnse'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 noting and reporting an incident of bullying behaviour

- a. Children are encouraged to report bullying behaviour, no matter how trivial it seems, as soon as possible.
- b. It will be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not telling tales, but rather behaving responsibly.
- c. Parents are invited to discuss their concerns with a staff member if they feel their child is being bullied. Don't hope the problem will go away.
- d. Ancillary staff and parents are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying they witness to a teacher or the Principal. If they are not already aware of the fact, the class teacher will inform a pupil/s that an allegation of bullying has been made about them and is being investigated.
- e. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- f. The Principal should be informed that an allegation of bullying is being investigated.
- g. Where a case relating to a pupil remains unresolved at school level, it will be referred to the school's Board of Management

Procedures for Investigating and dealing with bullying

- a. The teacher of the class of the child who is alleged to have engaged in bullying behaviour and, if necessary, another teacher shall investigate the allegation unless the alleged perpetrator and the victim belong to different classes in which case both class teachers will investigate the complaint. Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- b. Such incidents may be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved may also provide very useful information in this way. Teachers who are investigating bullying behaviour will keep a written record of their discussions with those involved.
- c. In order for the relevant teachers to investigate allegations, it will be necessary to call on the assistance of LS/RT teachers who may occasionally need to take the teacher's class while investigations are underway.
- d. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident. For younger children, it may be necessary for them to dictate their account to the teacher who would write this for them and read it back to the child.
- e. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher/s will seek answers to questions of **what, who, when and why**. This will be done

calmly, setting an example of dealing with conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

- f. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually and then the group will be met as a whole by the relevant teacher and another member of staff. Each member will be asked for his account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said. If it is concluded that a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her that he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour, and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the point of view of the child who has been bullied. Each member of the group will be helped to handle the possible pressures that often face them from the other members after the interview. In this regard, it may be considered necessary to seek advice from a professional, e.g. National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS), on how to support a child who has been bullied or who has engaged in bullying behaviour.
- g. If the relevant teacher/s determines that bullying behaviour has not occurred, the parties will be notified of the result of the investigation and the reasons for the decision.
- h. In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, the relevant teacher/s will meet separately with the parent(s) of the two (or more) parties involved as appropriate. The relevant teacher/s will outline the results of the investigation and will explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy. The following steps will be taken:
 - i. Scoil Náisiúnta Baile na hÍnse will utilise a Restorative Justice practice approach in its initial stage of resolving the situation. (Restorative justice is an approach to justice that focuses on the needs of the victims and the offenders, as well as the involved community. Victims take an active role in the process, while offenders are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions, to repair the harm they've done—by apologising and doing something positive and constructive to make amends to the person hurt or offended. Restorative justice involves and focuses on the personal needs of both the victim and offender and it provides help for the offender in order to avoid future offences.) All staff will be made aware of the importance of this practice.
 - ii. Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will 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.
 - iii. With any reported incident of bullying behaviour within the school, the parent(s) will be kept apprised of developments and stages of the investigation as the situation dictates and as early as reasonably possible.
 - iv. It must be understood by all those involved (parents and pupils) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his/her parents and the school.
 - v. If bullying reoccurs, a formal contract will be entered into by both parties, and the parent(s) of both parties will be informed. The contract will be monitored regularly by the relevant teacher/s to see that the situation is resolved.
 - vi. If after the above, the bullying behaviour recurs, a formal meeting of the child who has engaged in this behaviour, his/her parent(s), the Principal and

the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be held and a formal suspension in line with the school's Code of Behaviour may occur.

- vii. In cases where the relevant teacher/s 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, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher/s in the 'Bullying Incident Report Form'.
- viii. The form will also be used, if it is deemed necessary by the relevant teacher/s that the bullying behaviour should be recorded and reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal. Blank report forms are available from the secretary's office. These report forms will be kept in a folder and filed securely in the Principal's Office.
- ix. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- x. In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children

9. Scoil Náisiúnta Baile na hÍnse's **programme of support** for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- Support will be provided for anyone who is bullied by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about their experience with their teacher or Principal, along with continuing support when they feel they may need it. A child who has been bullied will be assured that the school community will help them and put monitoring procedures in place to safeguard them. They are advised that they have made the correct decision in reporting the bullying.
- The school will inform the child's parents of what has happened and of the measures being taken to help them. The parents will be encouraged to report further incidents if they occur.
- Help and support will be sought for a child who has engaged in bullying behaviour. This will include speaking with them to discover why they became involved, informing their parents and continuing to work with them in order to modify their behaviour. The school's Code of Behaviour applies to bullying. The child will be helped to see things from the point of view of the child who has been bullied. A child who has engaged in bullying behaviour may be excluded from the playground at lunchtime, for example, or subject to special monitoring procedures and if bullying continues they may be suspended in accordance with procedure.
- Follow up meetings may be arranged between the parties involved, together with their parents, to assess progress and/or restore relationships.
- Intervention from National Educational Psychological Service (N.E.P.S.) or counselling service may be considered if deemed necessary.

10. The Board of Management of Scoil Náisiúnta Baile na hÍnse's 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.
11. All **complaints against a teacher** are handled under the agreed INTO/CPSMA Complaints Procedure. A parent wishing to make a complaint should approach the class teacher with a view to resolving the complaint. A hard copy of this procedure may be obtained from the school office at any time. A hard copy is also included in the Enrolment Booklet which all parents receive when they enrol their child.
12. **Prevention of Harassment**-The Board of Management confirms that Scoil Náisiúnta Baile na hÍnse 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.
13. The policy was reviewed and adopted by the Board of Management on 13th February 2023. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and a copy provided to the Parents Association and all new entrants.
14. The 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.

Signed: Shane McGrath _____

Date: _____

Principal/Secretary of Board of Management

Signed: Philip Kelly _____

Date: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Appendix 1: Examples of Bullying Behaviour

The list of examples is non exhaustive, and schools may wish to add behaviours which reflect their own circumstances.

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller back-ground • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malicious 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" • Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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