

# **Bray School Project Anti-bullying Policy**

## **1. Full Compliance:**

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 **Bray School Project National 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.

## **2. Key Principles of Best Practice:**

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 staff 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; 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 behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
  - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

This policy must be taken in conjunction with other supportive school policies such as

- The Code of Behaviour,
- B.S.S.E. (Belief Systems, Spiritual and Ethical Education),
- The Social Personal and Health Education Programme,  
(including R.S.E., Walk Tall and Stay Safe).

### **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.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- **Physical Aggression** such as hitting, pushing, shoving etc.,
- **Verbal Aggression** such as name calling, slagging, teasing, taunting, threats,
- **Damage** to the property/clothes of another child/children,
- **Isolation/Exclusion** from groups/peers,
- **Gesture** such as using body language or non-verbal signs,
- **\*Cyber-bullying** such as abusive phone calls/text messages/social media sites,
- **Intimidation,**
- **Malicious gossip** and other forms of relational bullying,
- **Extortion** of money, property or lunch from a child,
- **Identity-based bullying** such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community or a person's religion and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

\*Isolated or once-off incidents of offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging do not fall within the definition of bullying and should also 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.

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

In the first instance, it is the class teacher who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying.

The class teacher will inform:

Carol Lanigan (School Principal)

Suzanne Godfrey (Deputy Principal)

All reported incidents which are serious or part of a pattern of behaviour will be recorded, investigated and dealt with as per procedures outlined in section 6 of policy.

If parents/ guardians are unhappy with the response from the class teacher(s) they should bring the matter to the attention of the Principal.

If parents/ guardians are unhappy with the response from the Principal, they should bring the matter to the attention of the Board of Management.

## **5. Our education and prevention strategies:**

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:

### **Programmes that help prevent Bullying:**

B.S.S.E. / Learn Together Programme,  
Circle time,  
Stay Safe Programme,  
Walk Tall Programme,  
Relationships and Sexuality Education (R.S.E.),  
Roots of Empathy,  
Buddy System,  
Stand Up programme,  
SALT programme.

### **Procedures /Activities that help prevent Bullying:**

Yard time rules and reminders,  
Yard supervision,  
Record of yard behaviour on clipboard,  
Clipboard/staff meeting 'Alerts' to staff to look out for certain issues/children,  
Behaviour reflection sheet (3rd - 6th classes) when deemed necessary,  
Creation of classroom charters / Golden Rules / Positive classroom rules,  
Assemblies to encourage positive behaviour,  
Web safety awareness talks,  
Friendship/Anti-bullying awareness week,

### **Communications with Parents and Guardians:**

B.S.P. website,  
Newsletters,  
Information meetings/Curriculum meetings,  
Parent/ Teacher meetings,  
Parental involvement in class activities during the school day,  
Parent Teacher Association activities,  
Visits to classrooms,  
Relevant homework,  
Individual Education Planning meetings (for children in receipt of resource hours),  
Emails from school,  
Phone call from class teacher/Principal,  
In the case of serious incidents the Principal may deem it necessary to phone each parent in a particular class/ classes.

**Relevant School Policies:**

Social Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) school plan,  
Acceptable Use of Technology Policy,  
Code of Behaviour (currently under review),  
Anti-racism Policy,  
Child Protection Policy,  
Safety statement.

**Continuous Professional Development for staff:**

Summer courses on dealing with Bullying/promoting positive behaviour,  
Training in Roots of Empathy,  
S.E.S.S. training courses: The 3 R's to Bullying Prevention for students with S.E.N.,  
Dedicated Croke park hours focused on dealing with Bullying and Behavioural issues.

**6. Our procedures in regard to Bullying Behaviour:**

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:

Investigation and follow up:

- 1) The primary objective for the relevant teacher in an investigation of a bullying incident is to resolve the issue and to restore as far as is possible the relationship of the individuals involved as opposed to the apportioning of blame.
- 2) Reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant class teacher. Pupils should be assured that in reporting they are behaving in a responsible manner and that it will not be viewed as 'telling tales'.
- 3) Every child has a responsibility to report any incidents of bullying behaviour to a member of staff or to their parents. Parents should also encourage their children to report such behaviour. Bullying behaviour can only be dealt with if it is reported.
- 4) All staff, including non-teaching staff, are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying witnessed by them to the relevant teacher.
- 5) In any investigation the relevant teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement as to whether bullying has occurred and how best to deal with it. The teacher may also seek advice from colleagues to ascertain how best to deal with the situation.
- 6) The cooperation of parents and pupils is necessary to ensure the prompt resolution of issues and the restoration of relationships (where this is feasible).
- 7) All incidents of bullying will be dealt with in a calm and unemotional manner with an emphasis on establishing the facts at the earliest opportunity.
- 8) Incidents will be investigated outside the class to protect the privacy of all involved.
- 9) Interviews will be conducted sensitively and with due regard to the rights of all students involved.
- 10) Students who are not directly involved may be interviewed as their perspective can cast light on the situation.

The students will be asked to outline:

- What happened?
- What did you do?
- Why?
- What were you thinking?
- What is the result of the action?
- Who has been affected?
- How?
- What needs to be done to make the situation better?

- 11) In the case of a group involvement, a similar approach is taken with those involved interviewed individually.
- 12) It may also be appropriate to ask pupils to write an account of what has happened.
- 13) If and when it has been established by the relevant teacher that there has been a bullying incident the parents of those involved will be contacted and informed at an early stage. The school will outline the events that led up to the determination that bullying was an issue and the manner in which it has been addressed.
- 14) The student engaged in bullying behaviour will be informed that they are in breach of the school's Anti Bullying Policy and he/she will be supported to try to see it from the point of view of the person being bullied.
- 15) The teacher will follow the strategies for managing behaviour as set out in the Code of Behaviour (which is currently under review).

Class teacher will lead investigation:

- i. Interview children directly involved (both victim and child engaged in bullying behaviour),
- ii. Interview children indirectly involved (classmates, to help establish events/incidents),
- iii. Inform Carol/Suzanne of issues of concern and what investigations have happened already,
- iv. Inform parents/guardians of victim (phone call or in a meeting),
- v. Inform parents/guardians of child engaged in bullying behaviour (phone call or in a meeting),
- vi. Class teacher and Principal agree an appropriate action and support for both victim and child engaged in bullying behaviour,
- vii. Follow up meeting with victim,
- viii. Follow up meeting with child engaged in bullying behaviour,
- ix. Follow up phone call/meeting with parents/guardians of victim,
- x. Follow up phone call/meeting with parents/guardians of child engaged in bullying behaviour.
- xi. Behaviour Contracts may on occasion be drawn up for individuals involved in bullying incidents and reviewed regularly with child's chosen mentor on the staff. Parents may be involved in this process.

## **7. The school's programme of support:**

Possible supports for victim (with help from Learning Support Staff):

Circle time,  
Participation in a Social skills group,  
Games/ activities to boost self-esteem,  
Nature Walk,  
Art work,  
Baking,  
\*Counselling.

Possible actions taken and supports for child engaged in bullying behaviour (with help from Learning Support Staff):

Separation (different table, shared area, another area in the school),  
Sanctions from the school's Code of Behaviour (currently under review),  
Written sincere apology,  
Diary entry (from point of view of victim),  
Social story,  
Social skills group,  
\*Counselling,  
Circle time,  
Time with teacher (in order to establish if this child has their own issues or difficulties which may require further support.)

(\*May be provided by an outside agency.)

### **Advice for Parents:**

Effects of Bullying:

Bullying can affect students in many different ways. When students are bullied their lives may be made miserable. They may suffer physical injury. They may be unhappy about coming to school. They may lose self-confidence and self-esteem and blame themselves for the bullying behaviour towards them. Some children may exhibit stressful symptoms such as stomach aches and headaches, nightmares or panic attacks. (This form of unhappiness is likely to affect their concentration and learning).

If bullying behaviour is unchallenged other students can learn that it is an effective way of controlling others and getting what they want.

Indications of Bullying Behaviour – Signs and Symptoms:

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

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school – requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school.
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, mitching.
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.

- Pattern of physical illnesses (eg headaches, stomach aches).
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour. It may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after long school holidays.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress – stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting.
- Spontaneous out of character comments about either students or teachers.
- Possessions missing or damaged.
- Increased requests for money or stealing money.
- Unexplained bruising, cuts or damaged clothing.
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling her/him.

These signs do not necessarily mean that a student is being bullied. If repeated or occurring in combination, these signs warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the child.

What to do if you suspect your child is being bullied:

- Discuss the experience with your child to find out the precise details of what has happened.
- Reassure her/him that you and the school will help him,
- Discuss with her/him what to do next - she/ he may be able to suggest strategies for dealing with it.
- Encourage him/her to tell his/ her teacher(s).
- Contact the school as soon as possible.
- Follow-up to ensure that the matter is dealt with and resolved.

What to tell your child to do if he/she is being bullied:

- Tell the teacher(s) immediately.
- Help the teacher(s) to investigate it.
- Tell the bully to stop – teach your child the appropriate way to do this, e.g.: "I want you to stop saying that to me. I don't like it and I will have to report you to the teacher if it happens again."
- Tell your parents when you get home.
- Tell a friend about what is happening.

What to tell your child to do if someone they know is being bullied:

- Tell the teacher(s) (privately if necessary).
- Tell his/her parents – they will contact the school.
- Talk to the person who is being bullied – you may be able to help him/her.
- Reject bullying behaviour among your friends – tell them that it is wrong to bully.
- Help the bullied person to get away from the situation.
- Know and follow the school Code of Behaviour.

## **8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring 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 adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_ [date].

**11.** This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parent Teacher Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Patron if requested.

**12.** The Board of Management will review this policy and its implementation on an annual basis. The first review will take place in October 2014. The Board will inform staff and parents that the review is taking place. At this time they will welcome comments for consideration. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parent Teacher Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Patron and the Department.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Boris Fennema, Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Carol Lanigan, Principal)

Date of next review: Oct. 2014

## **Template for recording bullying behaviour**

### **1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

### **2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(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))\***

Playground	
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	Extortion	
Gesture	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:**

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### **9. Details of actions taken:**

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant Teacher) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal \_\_\_\_\_

**\* Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances

