Bandonbridge National School

Anti-bullying Policy

Date of ratification: **09/04/2014**

Date of review: February 2017

Date of review: September 2018

Date of review: 10/06/2019

Date of review: 06/10/2021

Introduction

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 Bandonbridge N.S. 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.

Rationale

The Board of Management of Bandonbridge N.S. recognises the very serious nature of bullying (including cyberbullying) and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils.

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

The school has a central role in the children's social and moral development just as it does in their academic development. In school, we work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. The individuality of each child needs to be accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of every child to education in a disruption free environment.

In Bandonbridge we strive to be a community where all pupils are respected – irrespective of gender, social background, family circumstances, educational achievement, physical characteristics, or intellectual functioning. Pupils experience a sense of caring and belonging, they are treated fairly, and their spiritual, moral, and religious development is encouraged, as is their intellectual, social, and academic development.

The Board of Management and the staff of Bandonbridge N.S are 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**

h) **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.**

How our school promotes positive relationships

- The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- The school promotes habits of self-respect, self–discipline and responsibility among its members.
- The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
- The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
- The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.
- The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
- The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses teacher observation to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears, or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
- The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a whole school basis.
- The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life skills.
- The school recognises the role of other school community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy, and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
- The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

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 list of examples below is non-exhaustive, may be amended/ added to as circumstances dictate.

Examples of Bullying Behaviours

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/teasing • 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 • **Cyberstalking**: 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 or during remote teaching/video conferencing with a teacher/SNA e.g., Facebook **(N.B. - a person must be over the age of 13 to have a Facebook account)** /Ask.fm/ Twitter/YouTube 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: • Negative and judgemental comparisons • 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 of 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

The **Relevant Teachers** in Bandonbridge N.S. are: Class teachers, Support teachers and the Principal
Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

Education and Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyberbullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that may be used by the school are as follows :

<u>**School-wide approach**</u>

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils 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 develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it – prevention and intervention.
- A regular audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/ guardian(s), and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Involvement of the student population in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school - to be displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school. Do we have a uniform one? What can we display?
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour on enrolment of a pupil. At beginning of each year parents/guardians are directed to the policy on the school website and the policy is displayed in the policy folder at the Junior Infant parent meeting every September.
- The implementation of regular per term whole school awareness measures which may include: a dedicated notice noticeboard in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention;

- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. 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, e.g.:
  o Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  o Hand note up with homework.
  o Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
  o A note in a class communication box (Worry Box)
  o Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  o Administer a confidential questionnaire to older pupils.
  o Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. *Talk About Programme; SALT; Anti bullying campaign resources from the Anti Bullying Campaign website; Stay Safe.*

Implementation of curricula
- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes including Stay Safe for Children with SEN.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes, e.g., Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme.
- School wide delivery of lessons on **Cyberbullying** (Be Safe, Be Webwise, Webwise Primary teachers' resources), **Diversity and Interculturalism**.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardaí, cover issues around personal safety and cyberbullying
- 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.
- The school will implement the advice in "Sexual Orientation advice for schools" (RSE Primary, see booklet).

Links to other policies
- This policy links to the following school policies, practices, and activities: Code of Behaviour, Child Protections Policy, Supervision of Pupils, Acceptable Use Policy, Attendance.

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 (rather than to apportion blame);

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 may include the following

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.
- 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 should 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 should give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity to discuss 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**. Each case will be treated on its own individual merits.

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

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner i.e., what has been reported is recorded as is disclosed by the individual.

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 teacher.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, must be investigated, and dealt with by the relevant teacher; the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

Formal Stage 1: determination that bullying has occurred

- 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.

- All records must be retained by the relevant teacher and kept in a locked filing cabinet. These records should be passed to the principal at the end of the school year to be stored securely until the pupils are 25 to comply with the school's data protection policy. A record is made in the student's support file. At the end of each school year during the handover meetings, the class teacher will inform the subsequent class teacher of any relevant incidents.

Formal Stage 2: Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures and must be adhered to)

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

a) 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
b) 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: e.g. Using school computer to place 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; repeated severe aggressive behaviour.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. All records must be kept in a locked filing cabinet. These records should be passed to the next teacher at the end of the school year. When the class completes its time in Bandonbridge all records must be passed to the principal to be stored securely until the pupils are 25 to comply with the school's data protection policy, at this point records are destroyed.

Established intervention strategies

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s)s to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing
- Implementing questionnaires

Further strategies that may be referred to:
www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/BullyingPreventionStrategiesinSchools Ken Rigby.pdf

- The traditional disciplinary approach
- Strengthening the victim
- Mediation
- Restorative Practice
- The Support Group Method
- The Method of Shared Concern

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.
  - Buddy / Peer mentoring
  - Student Support Team
  - Group work such as circle time
- If pupils require counselling or further supports, the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. A period of support from the SET team may also be put in place-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 teacher.

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.

The following Prompt Questions may be useful in continually assessing the effectiveness of the policy:

- Are there agreed appropriate monitoring and supervision practices in the school?
- Have bullying danger spots been identified?
- Have parents and pupils been consulted in the identification of these danger spots?
- How will the student support/care structures (SPHE, Learning Support teachers) support measures to counteract bullying behaviour?
- How will pupils, in particular senior pupils, be involved as a resource to assist in counteracting bullying? In this regard, has a mentoring/buddy system been considered?
- In relation to Acceptable Use Policy in the school are the following issues addressed:
  - Are all Internet sessions supervised by a teacher?
  - Does the school regularly monitor pupils' Internet usage?
  - Have pupils been instructed to use only approved class accounts for email purposes and to use these only under teacher supervision?
  - Have pupils been instructed to access only those chat rooms, discussion forums and messaging or other electronic communication fora that have been approved by the school?

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.

Ratification and review

This policy was adopted initially by the Board of Management on 09/04/2014. This policy and its implementation are reviewed annually by staff and the Board of Management. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department of Education and Skills

Communication

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, and available to all parents/guardians prior to the enrolment of their children in the school. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the patron if requested.

Signed:
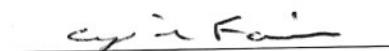
Appendix 1

Some CBT helpful tips
Information and Tips for Pupils

Remember:

- Keep unhelpful hands, feet, objects, and comments to yourself.
- Know the difference between TELLING and TELLING ON.
- Play preferred games.
- Be in the right place at the right time
- Say **no** to bullies

When you are being bullied:	**After you have been bullied:**
- Tell yourself that bullying is wrong. You do not deserve to be bullied. - If you can, be firm and clear - look them in the eye and tell them to stop - Try not to fight back - Get away from the situation and tell an adult as quickly as possible - If you can, try not to be on your own in places where bullying happens	- Do not blame yourself for what has happened - Tell a teacher or another adult in your school - Tell your family - If you are scared to tell a teacher or an adult on your own, ask a friend to go with you - Keep on speaking up until someone listens - If the bullying has happened by text message or on the Internet do not delete the message without copying it or taking a screenshot/ photo of it.
When you are telling an adult about being bullied be clear about:	**What pupils who witness bullying can do:**
- What has happened to you? - How often it has happened? - Who was involved? - Who saw what was happening? - Where did it happen? - What you have done about it already? - How it started in the first place?	- Tell a teacher or staff member what is happening - Do not allow someone to be deliberately left out of a group - Do not smile or laugh in a mean way when someone is being bullied - Encourage people who are bullied to join in with group games etc. - If you can, tell the bully to stop what they are doing

Appendix 2: Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like, and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school.
  - Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors, and other areas of unstructured supervision.
  - Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.