



# St. Brendan's NS, Clonfert

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## Anti-Bullying Policy

All sections of this template must be completed

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 Clonfert 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. 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 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.

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*.

3. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*): recommends that the relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying in Primary Schools is/are the class teacher(s). In the case where children from two different classes are involved, both class teachers will be deemed to be the relevant teachers. In such a case a local agreement can be made between the two relevant teachers that one of them take on the case, or they can work together on this. The principal thereafter if necessary
4. 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 (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):
  - The anti-bullying module of the SPHE program as it applies during its school year, at least five awareness raising exercises per school year for each class group. Friendship week, buddy bench, well-being day including resources from <https://www.pdst.ie/primary/antibullying>
  - Anti-bullying posters and signage will be clearly visible throughout the school encouraging positive anti bullying behavior.
  - Prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying and involves strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
  - Provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth
  - Prevention and awareness raising measures focusing on cyber-bullying by educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online
  - Teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner

- 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. The 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 & RSE programmes at primary level are personal safety skills programmes which seek to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. Various other social, health and media education programmes can further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour.
  - Anti-bullying surveys
  - Guest speakers will be invited annually to speak to the students on the importance of eliminating bully type behavior in our school
  - The work will be extended into many other areas of our curriculum such as art drama religious education and physical education. During our sporting activities and team games we will promote the inclusion of everyone with a particular focus on improvement the aim for all
  - School staff will model good behaviour and show children how to react in difficult situations, our many well-being initiatives help instill in the children the importance of maintaining our mental health and highlight how anti bullying behaviour can adversely affect other children's mental health.
  - Awareness raising exercises each year for each class group explaining the nature and variety causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying.
  - Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behavior are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.
  - Pupils are encouraged to recognize, reject and report bullying behavior, either spontaneously verbally or true pupil communication notes that are used in school.
5. 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 relevant teachers investigate incidents of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behavior to an end. 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.
  - When analyzing incidents of bullying behavior, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, when, where, who and why.
  - If a group is involved each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all that was involved should be met as a group. At a group meeting, each member should be asked for his or her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
  - The school through the relevant teacher reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened as part of an investigation. This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that the pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.
  - Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the relevant teacher to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it. In the event that they have been involved in bullying behavior they are asked to sign a binding promise that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil. In the case of pupils who are unable to sign a promise, two teachers will record & a verbal promise received from the pupil.
  - The relevant teacher does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying as a behavior that can be and must be remedied. He or she emphasizes that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a

promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. Pupils who report bullying therefore are not getting others in trouble so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continued. Parents are notified at this point.

- When an investigation is completed and our bullying situation is resolved the relevant teacher will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information.
- If a pupil has signed such a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behavior, then the pupil is not reforming as promised. In this event parent or guardian will be informed. This recurrence of bullying is regarded as a very serious matter had a serious sanction maybe imposed by the school authorities (see sanctions below)
- All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school
- It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

5. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behavior 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. These incidents will be recorded on the children's files with reports attached.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must also 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 one- 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, including a binding promise from the bullying pupil to reform their behavior, which will assist his or her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as possible, the relationships of the parties involved.
- These records should be stored in the bullying incidents folder in the principal's office.
- Formal stage two-appendix three (from DES procedures)
- The relevant teacher must use the recording template at appendix 2 to record the bullying behavior in the following circumstances.
- Cases where he or she considers that the bullying behavior has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he or she has determined that bullying behavior occurred; And
- Where the investigating teacher or teachers has determined that bullying has taken place and where the pupil has been asked to sign a binding promise to reform their behaviour. (When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal in the bullying incidents folder in the main office.
- Sanctions  
Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behavior, has formerly promised to stop and has broken that promise, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:
  - Parents or guardians will be contacted by the relevant teacher and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behavior; the parents will be invited to a meeting with the relevant teacher and the principal; The pupil may receive attention or in severe cases be suspended from school.
  - If a pupil should engage in bullying behavior again following the imposition of a serious sanction, the pupil will immediately receive a further serious sanction.
  - The case may be referred to the board of management and the pupil may be expelled from the school.

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

- Bullied pupils
  - Ending the bullying behaviour
  - changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
  - changing the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,
  - indicating clearly that bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness raising program
  - indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
  - helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in Group work in class and in extracurricular group or team activities during our after school).
  - implementing a buddy system in school if applicable or making use of our buddy bench in school.
  
- Bullying Pupils
  - making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a clean sheet
  - making it clear that bullying pupils who were former doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this,
  - helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills
  - using learning strategies to rogue the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupil's feelings of self-worth
  - in dealing with negative behavior in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behavior while supporting the child,
  - in dealing with bullying behavior seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a clean sheet and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

## **6. 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.

## **7. 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.

8. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022.
  
9. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.
  
10. 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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents'

Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: Fr Declan McNerney  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Niall Kelly  
(Principal)

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2022

Date of next review: 2023/24

## 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.

## Appendix 3 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		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.



## Appendix 4 Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

To: \_\_\_\_\_

The Board of Management of \_\_\_\_\_ wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of \_\_\_\_\_ [date].
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

Date \_\_\_\_\_