

# Ballymacarbry Central School

Ballymacarbry, Via Clonmel, Co. Waterford. E91 E426 Roll # 19345P  
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Michael J. O'Ryan – Principal

*"Ní neart go cur le chéile"*



## School Position on Bullying

The Ballymacarbry NS school community believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation. The teachers in this school together with other staff members seek, on an ongoing basis, to cultivate an environment in the school that is free from bullying.

This 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, this school does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the well being of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

**The immediate priority, should a bullying situation arise, is ending the bullying, (*thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted*) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using a 'Reform, not Blame' approach.**

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation in or outside the school, involving or having an impact on members of the school community, they should notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

Pupils' participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

## Anti-Bullying Policy

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 Ballymacarbry NS 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;
  - 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* 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 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*.

4. The 'Relevant Teacher(s)' for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school this year (as required in Procedures, Appendix 1 – *Template Anti-Bullying Policy* section 4) are indicated in Appendix 4 below.  
(*'At primary level, the relevant teacher will normally be the class teacher.'* Procedures 6.8.3)

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying) used by the school include both of the following:
- The anti-bullying module of the SPHE programme as it applies during each school year, particularly the relevant exercises from the "*Walk Tall*" and "*Stay Safe*" programmes, and
  - Awareness-raising exercises from the 'Awareness-Raising' strand of the *Anti-Bullying Campaign* programme, pro-actively explaining the nature and variety, causes, negative consequences and unacceptability of bullying.

Using a combination of exercises from these programmes on a monthly basis, pupils will experience approximately 10 short awareness-raising exercises each year. In the process:

- Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying situations and so become 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 surveys that are regularly used in the school each year – e.g., a survey of all pupils who can read and write every half-term.

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).

Through regular reports in school newsletters and other communications, as well as at meetings with parent/guardian groups, parents/guardians are regularly informed of the anti-bullying activities of the school and encouraged to support its work.

- An annual anti-bullying/friendship day/week (*if applicable*),
- Other (*if applicable*) . . .

6. The school's procedures for uncovering, investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour, and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour, (e.g., the "4 Essential Steps" approach available from the '*Resolving Bullying Situations*' section of the *Anti-Bullying Campaign website*) are as follows:

- The 'Relevant Teacher' investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, whether these take place within the school or outside it but with an impact within it, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end.
- Since bullying is often hidden from teachers and not reported, but pupils "see everything," surveys are regularly used (e.g., every half-term) to uncover possible bullying situations, allowing pupils to suggest to their teacher who s/he should talk to in relation to these.
- 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 any pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.
- Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the 'Relevant Teacher,' acting *in loco parentis*, to establish the nature and extent of the



behaviour and any reasons for it. In the event that they have been involved in bullying behaviour they are asked to sign a binding promise that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s).

- The 'Relevant Teacher' does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as something that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises 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' but rather enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continued.
- When an investigation is completed and/or a 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 behaviour, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed, at that "early stage," (Procedures 6.8.9. (xiv)) and requested to countersign their child's promise. Breach of this additional promise by further bullying behaviour would be regarded as a very grave matter and a sanction may be imposed by the school authorities (See sanctions below).
- All documentation regarding bullying situations and their resolution is retained securely in the school.
- **Sanctions:**

Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that promise, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:

- For (first) breach of promise – i.e., a resumption of bullying behaviour – s/he may be required to sign another promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian;
- In the unlikely event of a further (second) breach of promise – i.e. a resumption of bullying behaviour – the 'Relevant Teacher' may contact parent(s)/guardian(s) to inform them of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour, to discuss the matter with them with a view to coming to a better understanding the reasons for the bullying behaviour, to suggest actions to be taken to help meet their child's needs and to agree a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured;
- In the highly unlikely event of a further (third) breach of promise – parent(s) / guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the 'Relevant Teacher' and the principal and a sanction may be imposed in accordance with the Code of Behaviour of the school.
- In the extremely unlikely event of a further (fourth) breach of promise – the case may be referred to the Board of Management and a further sanction may be imposed in accordance with the Code of Behaviour of the school.

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

- **For bullied pupils** (as required under Procedures 5.2.2 (vii) and Appendix 1. 7.):
  - Ending the bullying behaviour,
  - Changing the school culture through ongoing awareness-raising to (a) foster more respect for bullied pupils and for all pupils and (b) foster greater empathy towards, and support for, bullied pupils,
  - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil (a reassurance bullied pupils often need), through ongoing awareness-raising and through the speedy identification of those involved in bullying and speedy resolution of bullying

- situations and, after resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a victim-impact statement,
- Making adequate support and/or counseling facilities available to pupils who need them (who seem less resilient and are slower to recover, make friends and enjoy school life again), within or outside the school as applicable, in a timely manner,
  - 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 extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).
  - Implementing a 'buddy system' in the school (*if applicable*).
- **For bullying pupils:** (as required under Procedures 5.2.2 (vii)):
    - 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 reform are doing the right and honorable thing and giving them praise for this,
    - seeking other ways to "catch them doing the right thing" and giving appropriate praise,
    - Supporting them to overcome learning difficulties through Support Staff provision and to overcome emotional and/or social difficulties through class management and pastoral care within the school,
    - Helping those whose self-esteem is low by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
    - Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth, including creating opportunities to use appropriate praise,
    - In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
    - In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.
    - Making adequate support and/or counselling facilities available to help remedy underlying issues for those who need them, within or outside the school as applicable, and to help them learn to meet their needs without violating the rights of others,

## 8. 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.

9. The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps as 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 **21<sup>st</sup> February 2022**.
11. 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 of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (*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 to the Department of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.

Signed: Eileen Condon  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: [Signature]  
(Principal)

Date: 21, 2, 2022

Date: 21, 2, 2022

Date of next review: February 2023

The 'Relevant Teacher(s)' for investigating and dealing with possible bullying situations in this school (As required in *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, 2013*

**Appendix 1 – Template Anti-Bullying Policy, section 4)**

(*'At primary level, the relevant teacher will normally be the class teacher.'* Procedures 6.8.3)

\_\_\_\_\_  
- Ms Emma Dunlea for Junior Infant Class.

\_\_\_\_\_  
- Mrs Louise Connolly for Senior Infant Class.

\_\_\_\_\_  
- Miss Claudia O'Keeffe for Rg 1& Rg 2 combination.

\_\_\_\_\_  
- Mrs Jackie Coffey for Rg 2 & Rg 3 Combination.

\_\_\_\_\_  
- Miss Ciara Denmead for Rg 3 & Rg 4 Combination.

\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
- Miss Clodagh Kelly / Mrs Michelle McGrath for Rg 5.

\_\_\_\_\_  
- Mrs Claire Byrne for Rg 6.

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

### **The school's procedure for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour (6 Step Approach) is as follows:**

- The 'Relevant Teacher' investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour.
- The school, through the 'Relevant Teacher' reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened.
- Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are asked to sign a binding promise that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s).
- The 'Relevant Teacher' does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a "mistake" that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises 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.
- When an investigation is completed and/or a 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. (Appendix 3)
- If a pupil has signed such a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a "mistake." In this event parent(s) /guardian(s) will be informed and requested to countersign their daughter/son's promise. Breach of this additional promise by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities.



## **Anti – Bullying Procedures Summary of Main Elements**

**The following is a summary of the main elements of these procedures:**

- All Boards of Management are required to formally adopt and implement an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of these procedures. A template anti-bullying policy which must be used by all schools for this purpose is provided in App 1 of these procedures.
- The school's anti-bullying policy must 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 copy of the school's anti-bullying policy must be provided to the Department and the patron if requested.
- Bullying is defined as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. These procedures make clear that this definition includes cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying (such as homophobic bullying and racist bullying).
- These procedures outline key principles of best practice for both preventing and tackling bullying and require all schools to commit to these principles in their anti-bullying policy.

**The key principles are:**

1. *A positive school culture and climate;*
2. *Effective leadership; o A school-wide approach;*
3. *A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;*
4. *Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures);*
5. *Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;*
6. *Supports for staff;*
7. *Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies);*
8. *On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.*

• These procedures recognise that a cornerstone in the prevention of bullying is a positive school culture and climate that is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity and respect. These procedures outline key elements of a positive school culture and climate and also provide schools with some practical tips for building a positive school culture.

• These procedures highlight the importance of a school-wide (mgt, staff, pupils and parents) approach. In addition to the role of management and staff, parents and pupils have a role and responsibility in helping the school to prevent and address school-based bullying behaviour and to deal with any negative impact within school of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere.

• These procedures require that the prevention of bullying must be an integral part of a school's anti-bullying policy. The education and prevention strategies that the school will

implement must be documented in the anti-bullying policy and must explicitly deal with the issue of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.

- A school's anti-bullying policy must also set out the school's procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying and the school's procedures for the formal noting and recording of bullying behaviour. The school's procedures must be consistent with the guidance and direction set out in this document.
  - These procedures emphasise that the primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and restore as far as is practicable the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).
  - **In any case where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred**
  - **the parents 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); and**
  - **the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.**
- The relevant teacher must record the bullying behaviour in the standardised recording template at Appendix 3 (and a copy must be provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable) in the following circumstances:
    - **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**
    - **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.**

The procedures include oversight arrangements which require that, at least once in every school term, the principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:

- the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template in App 3) to the Principal or Dep Principal since the previous report to BOM confirmation that all of these cases have been, or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and these procedures.

As part of the oversight arrangements, the Board of Management must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation by the school.

Written notification that the review has been completed must 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' Assoc. (where one exists). A standardised notification which must be used for this purpose is included at Appendix 4. A record of the review and its outcome must be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

#### Appendix 4 Checklist for annual review of the Anti-Bullying Policy

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?	No
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	No
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	No
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?	No
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?	✓

Notification regarding the BOM's annual review of the Anti-Bullying Policy

To: SCHOOL PATRON,

The Board of Management of BALLYMACARBRY  
N. SCHOOL 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 21<sup>st</sup> FEB '22 [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 Eileen Condon  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 21/2/2022

Signed Michael J O'Ry  
Principal

Date 21/2/2022