



BREAFFY NATIONAL SCHOOL

***Breaffy National School,
Breaffy, Castlebar.***

Anti-Bullying Policy – Breaffy National School 2021

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 Breaffy National School, Breaffy, Castlebar** had 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 talking 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.

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 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.

Some examples of bullying behaviour are listed below:

GENERAL BEHAVIOURS WHICH APPLY TO ALL FORMS 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
- 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” i.e. staring at another student in a provocative manner e.g. in a threatening, condescending or menacing way.
- Invasion of personal space
- A combination of any of the types listed.

CYBER

- **Denigration:** Spreading rumours, 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
- **Cyber Stalking:** Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety
- Silent telephone / mobile phone call
- Abusive telephone / mobile phone call
- Abusive a/c
- Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook, / 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 i.e. 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

- Isolation & exclusion
- Ignoring
- Excluding from the group
- Taking someone's friends away
- Spreading rumours
- Breaking confidence
- Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear

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.

4. The **relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying in Breaffy National School , Breaffy, Castlebar,Co Mayo** are the Principal, Deputy Principal and class teachers. Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant. Bullying will normally be investigated by the relevant class teacher.

5. **The Education and Prevention Strategies:** (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic) that will be used by the school are as follows:

- Recognition and respect for the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being – i.e. We promote the value of diversity.
- Acknowledgement of the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- Further recognition of the corresponding responsibility of each person to respect the uniqueness and rights of others.
- Promotion of positive habits of self-respect and self-discipline.

We promote and teach, in a very intentional way –

- (a) Respect for education and the right to learn

- (b) The importance of creating and maintaining a safe environment in which to teach and learn
- (c) Respect for personal and school property
- (d) The importance of positive interpersonal relationships
- (e) Anti-bullying is addressed by the principal at assemblies throughout the year.

SPHE is an integral part of life in Breaffy National School. Through our daily involvement with the children we strive to give each child a positive sense of self-worth and confidence, which will enable them to deal with the pressures of modern day living. To this end we formally teach the Stay Safe, Walk Tall and RSE Programmes in each class, over a two year alternating programme. (see "Making the Links", Appendix 3)

There are specific lessons relating to the topic of Bullying in the Stay Safe Programme and these are taught explicitly at each class level. Through these we endeavour to ensure that the children recognise the nature of bullying behaviour, understand the role of the bystander and are equipped with skills necessary to understand the role of the bystander and are equipped with the necessary skills to cope. We encourage a culture of telling where the children are secure in the knowledge that when they report an incident to a trusted staff member in good faith, they are acting responsibly. We also address the issues of internet and social media safety in our classes through the use of resources like web-wise. The school may invite local Gardai in to talk about internet safety. We have held anti-cyber bullying and internet safety information nights for parents twice in 2017/18 and plan this as an annual event to maintain vigilance and awareness. We have also since the guidelines were published in September 2013 held an Anti-bullying seminar with the parents. We also had anti-bullying workshops for pupils to raise awareness in this area in 2012/2013 and in 2017/2018. These were joint Parents' Association and Board of Management initiatives.

We ensure that all children, in particular those with SEN, are helped to understand the nature of bullying, and how to seek help regarding situations where they feel unsafe. Our SEN team form an integral part of our school approach. The promotion of inclusion and helping each other out is a cornerstone of the spirit of St John's National School.

- Our school will implement the advice in "**Sexual Orientation Advice of School**" as outline in the RSE Programme.
- Catholic School, we cover the Alive O Programme for senior classes and Grow in Love for Junior Classes up to 2nd class. The core Christian message of these programmes is the dignity and rights of every human being. The correlates directly with our S.P.H.E. classes and permeates how we interact with each other in our school daily.

Our Mission Statement is:

As a Roman Catholic School, we in Breaffy National School strive to educate in a holistic manner, with due regard for the uniqueness of each child and for his/her individual circumstances. We strive to develop a spirituality enriched, intellectually motivated, socially integrated individual who will proactively participate in his/her education. We value working in partnership with parents and with the local community. We care for our community. We care for each other and for our planet.

- Whole staff professional development is organised 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 in terms of prevention and intervention.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities applies to all teachers. In addition, 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.
- We have developed an Anti-Bullying Code for our school called "Don't hurt someone in their head, heart or body".
- Our protocol is to encourage parent(s), / Guardians to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied are as follows.
 - The parent(s)/guardians may inform any teacher of their concerns
 - That teacher will then inform the relevant teacher normally the class teacher
 - The relevant / class teacher will inform and consult with the principal.
 - If the parent(s)/guardians are not happy with the outcome, they can meet with the principal. (Refer also to our Complaints Procedure)

Links to other policies

- Our Acceptable Use Policy, Code of Behaviour, Complaints Procedure and Child Protection Policy are reviewed annually.
6. Our 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 underpinned by the fact that the majority of bullying incidents occur in the presence of bystanders. Therefore, we believed it is important to empower these bystanders to stand up for what is right, express their concerns and give witness to what they have observed. Encouraging all pupils to do the right thing and tell the truth is central as an intervention strategy in our school.

In Breaffy NS the primary aim in investigating and dealing with the bullying is to deal with the bullying in a manner that will resolve any issues and restore the relationships of the parties involved, as far as in practicable.

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach. Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardians) understand this approach from the outset.

REPORTING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardians 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 (SNA's), bus personnel, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, to the relevant teacher.

INVESTIGATING AND DEALING WITH INCIDENTS: Style of approach

- 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)/guardians 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 in this way.
- 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 statement.
- 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 of 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 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 of discussing 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 engaging 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 and 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.

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 resolved as far as is practicable.
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(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 parent(s)/guardian(s) have exhausted the school's complaints procedures are 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. 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.
- While 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 the same.

- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

Formal 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 her/his efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationship of the parties involved.
- In Breaffy National School, we will use the template for recording bullying behaviour, as outlined in the DES Anti-Bullying Procedures. Each teacher must use these templates. The storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher and passed to the DLP for secure storage with child protection material.

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

- 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. Active learning – methodologies – group and circle work as outlined in the SPHE programmes of Walk Tall, Stay Safe and RSE.
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with their parent(s)/guardian(s) and advise them on the supports available. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour. The principal may in exceptional circumstances and in consultation with the relevant teacher and parent suggest supports such as counselling.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.
- See also "What to do if you're being bullied".

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. 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 28/09/2015 and reviewed on June 25th 2018.
11. This policy has been **made available to school personnel**, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Patron if requested.
12. This policy and its' implementation will be **reviewed by the Board of Management** along with the **Child Protection Policy** once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested to the Patron and the Department.

Signed: Martin Greaney
Chairperson of the BOM

Signed: Seoirse O Morain
Principal

Date: 28/09/2015

Date: 28/09/2015

Signed: Tom Canavan
Chairperson of the BOM

Signed: Seoirse O Morain
Principal

Reviewed by BOM 25/6/2018 & July 2020

Date of current review by October 14th, 2021

Signed:

Signed:

Chairperson of BOM

Principal

Date: 14/10/21

Date: 14/10/21