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Code of Behaviour

INTRODUCTION

In compliance with Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management of **Ballyfinane N.S.** has prepared and made available a Code of Behaviour for its Pupils, Staff and Parents.

The Code of Behaviour details:

1. The standard of behaviour that shall be observed by each pupil attending the school;
2. The whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour;
3. The measures that shall be taken when a pupil fails or refuses to observe those standards;
4. The procedures to be followed before a pupil may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
5. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a pupil;
6. The school's Anti-Bullying Policy; and
7. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

The Code of Behaviour of **Ballyfinane National School** has been developed in accordance with 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools', National Educational Welfare Board, 2008.

POLICY FORMULATION

In formulating this policy the Board of Management completed the following steps;

- i. Parents and Staff were informed that an initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was available and they were invited to make submissions on the content of the Code of Behaviour within a specified time frame.
- ii. Teachers were requested to discuss the topic of 'rules' with their classes and submit a list of pupils suggestions to the Principal.
- iii. The initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was reviewed and where appropriate amended in-line with the feedback received.
- iv. The finalised draft of the policy was submitted for the Patron's Approval.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE CODE

The aims and objectives of the code are:

- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community
- To assist school staff, parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

The Board of Management recognises the importance of creating consistent values, policies, practices and relationships that support the Code of Behaviour. Such an environment may only be formed by involving the entire school community and in this respect the Board acknowledges the importance of the roles played by the principal, teachers, ancillary staff and parents in the review and operation of the Code.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

Pupils

General Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- Be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults
- Show respect for the property of, the school, other children and their own belongings
- Attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual (School starts at 9.00 a.m.)
- Do his/her best both in school and for homework
- Put a note if absent from school on Aladdin. A note on Aladdin is also required if a pupil is required to leave school early.
- Bring healthy lunches to school. Junk food and fizzy drinks are not allowed.

Classroom behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- **Listen- to the teacher and other pupils if they are speaking**
- **Work- to the best of his/her ability**
- **Value- school property and the belongings of fellow pupils**
- **Follow- the direction of his/her teacher**
- **Obtain- his/her teachers permission to leave the classroom**
- **Respect- the teacher, other pupils and visitors to the classroom**

Playground (Playing Pitches) Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- Play – safely avoiding any games or play that are rough or dangerous
- Follow – the directions of the playground supervisor(s)
- Remain – on the school grounds at all times
- Obtain – permission before re-entering the school building during break periods
- Respect – the yard supervisor and fellow pupils.
- Avoid – swearing, fighting or name calling. Fighting for fun is strictly forbidden.

Behaviour during School Outings/Activities

Each pupil is expected to:

- Follow- his/her teacher's directions at all times
- Remain – with the teacher/supervisors and group of pupils at all times
- Behave – politely towards those they meet on such trips
- Observe – the rules of general good behaviour

Your fellow students expect that you will:

- Not bully them
- Show acceptance and respect their differing personalities
- Never insult or belittle them because of differences.
- Respect their property
- Listen to them and acknowledge them
- Share equipment and resources with them

- Allow them to be part of the group
- Speak to them with courtesy and respect

Staff

It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure the school's Code of Behaviour is administered in a manner that is consistent and fair to all pupils. However, each staff member has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within common areas of the school.

Teaching Staff are specifically responsible for the management of behaviour within their own class. They will:

- Discuss the Code of Behaviour with their class in an age-appropriate manner at the beginning of the school year.
- Ensure the rules are displayed in the classroom.
- Encourage self-discipline and positive behaviour.
- Ensure there is an appropriate level of supervision at all times.
- Implement the reward/sanction scheme in a fair and consistent manner.
- Keep a written record of all incidents of continued, serious or gross misconduct. This record will indicate the advice and/or warnings given to the child on the misbehaviour and, the consequences of its repetition.
- Inform pupils when instances of misbehaviour on their part are being recorded.
- Report repeated instances of serious misbehaviour on their part are being recorded. (appendix 3)
- Report repeated instances of serious misbehaviour to the Principal.

Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians play a crucial role in shaping attitudes in their children which produce positive Behaviour in school. Parents/Guardians can assist the school by encouraging their children to abide by the school rules, encouraging punctuality and regular attendance and by ensuring that homework is given due time and effort. Should a parent/guardian be concerned about any aspect of their child's behaviour they are welcome to make an appointment to discuss their concerns. In cases of an identified pattern of misbehaviour parents will be invited to participate in the intervention process.

Parents can expect to:

- Be treated with respect;
- Have a safe and welcoming environment for their child
- Obtain recognition for individual differences among pupils having due regard for the resources that are available
- Have fair and consistent procedures applied to the school's dealings with pupils
- Receive progress reports in accordance with agreed school policy (P.T. meetings and end of year reports)
- Receive information on school's policies and procedures

Parents are *expected* to:

- Ensure their children attend school regularly and on time (**09.00**) and that they are collected from school on time (**13.40 or 14.40**)
- Encourage their children to follow the school's Code of Behaviour
- Ensure their children have the correct books and materials
- Have their children's belongings labelled
- Read written communication received from the school and respond appropriately
- Report to the office if calling to the school during the day for any reason
- Make an appointment beforehand if they need to see a teacher
- To treat all member so the school community with respect
- To provide a note on Aladdin for all absenteeism
- Inform class teacher through Aladdin of any change to collection procedure for their children

- Help their children to learn and practice good behaviour and to have a positive attitude towards themselves, other people and towards the school
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulty to others
- Communicate to the school problems which may affect their child's behaviour;
- Attend meetings at the school if requested
- Help their children with their homework and ensure it is completed.

SCHOOL RULES

In order to achieve a happy, healthy and safe working environment, where a sense of mutual respect is fostered, every pupil is expected to keep the following rules.

RESPECT AND COURTESY

All pupils are expected to treat staff and fellow pupils with respect and courtesy. Inappropriate behaviour i.e. rough play, bad language, fighting, personal remarks, pushing, kicking, and spitting will not be tolerated. School property and the property of others should be respected.

HEALTHY LUNCHES

Healthy lunches enable a child to work more efficiently i.e. sandwiches, fruit and yogurt. Cans, glass bottles, sweets and popcorn are discouraged.

- Crisps, fizzy drinks and chewing gum are not allowed.
- Nuts may be banned if required (if a child in the class has an allergy to nuts).
- Food must be eaten in the classroom. All wrappers and leftover food must be taken home.

HOMEWORK

- Homework is expected to be well done, clean and neat.
- Checking and signing by parents/guardians on a daily basis is recommended.
- Incomplete homework must be explained in **writing** by a parent/guardian.

ATTENDANCE

- Each child is expected to be in school at **9.00am**, when the bell rings and children need to be collected promptly at home time.
- Pupils are expected to be present every day
- A note to explain all absences should be written on Aladdin.
- Pupils leaving school early must be signed out by parent/guardian through the Aladdin system.

MOVEMENT THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL/ SCHOOL GROUNDS

- Entering and leaving the school must be done in an orderly manner.
- Pupils are asked to stand back and allow adults to pass.
- Running is strictly forbidden in classrooms and on corridors.

BREAK-TIMES

- Classroom/corridor/yard supervisors are to be obeyed at all times.
- No re-entering the school building during the breaks without permission of teacher/ yard supervisor.
- When the bell rings to signal the end of break-time, pupils are to line up quietly and stand in an orderly manner until collected by teacher.
- During inclement weather pupils remain indoors in their classrooms and may play with the games provided.

MOBILE PHONES

Mobile phones are not allowed by children in school. If children need to contact their parents the school phone may be used. Phones will be confiscated if children are found with them. These will then have to be collected by parents from the school office.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are asked that teachers be made aware of any special needs which a child may have.
- Parent(s)/guardians(s) are asked to make an appointment for parent/teacher meetings.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are asked to please check your child's hair regularly for outbreaks of head lice and treat if necessary.
- Requests to remain indoors during break times must be made in writing through email/Aladdin and signed by parent/guardian.
- All parents/guardians and visitors are required to report to the office.
- Children who are ill should not be in school.

PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

As a general rule the school will endeavour to create an environment where positive Behaviour is reinforced through praise and reward. School staff will use encouraging language and gestures, both in class and around the school, so that positive Behaviour is instantly recognised and positively rewarded. Special attention will be paid to pupils who have previously been associated with poor Behaviour so that not only good Behaviour but also improvement in Behaviour is acknowledged.

For Individuals, good behaviour may be acknowledged as follows:

1. A quiet word or gesture to show approval;
2. A word of praise in front of group/class
3. A mention to the principal;
4. A comment/smiley/sticker in the exercise book;
5. A certificate of achievement
6. A mention to parents (verbal or written);
7. A treat e.g., if terms of a behaviour contract are fulfilled.

Group/Class Reward Menu

1. A Group/Class treat such as:
2. Golden Time
3. Edible treat
4. DVD
5. Time given to preferred activity
6. Extra playtime
7. For groups within a class a system of merit marks
8. Garden Time
9. A mention to the principal
10. A mention to parents

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

In order to establish a common understanding and consistent response the Code of Behaviour classifies misbehaviour into three levels based on the degree of disruption caused by the misconduct. The Code also specifies the disciplinary actions and supportive interventions that will be employed.

Level One

Level 1: Behaviours

Level 1 Behaviours are those that interfere with the orderly learning environment of the school, classroom, and common areas. Students learn through their mistakes. To this extent, responses to the daily behaviours, which occur in school, will be developmentally appropriate, instructive and positive. Children will be taught what is expected and how they should behave. Listed below are some examples of the types of Behaviour that are included in Level 1. Please note the list is not exhaustive.

- Failure to prepare for class, as defined by the teacher
- Running in the hallways

- Disturbing the work or play of others
- Disrespectful language, tone, or manner
- Ignoring staff requests

Level 1: Disciplinary Actions

Consequences for level 1 behaviour are dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Teachers will discipline students at level 1. Some examples of Level 1 responses are:

- Verbal reprimand/reminder(s)
- Reinforcement of alternative positive behaviour
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others
- Prescribing additional work
- Loss of privileges
- Parent contact
- Behaviour contract

Level 1 Supportive Interventions

Listed below are some examples of Level 1 supportive actions:

- Classroom-based interventions, such as open circle or class meetings, with the option of informal consultation, (e.g. with parents/guardians or staff members)
- Discussion of behaviour with the child
- Informal notes regarding incident/intervention/date. This information would be useful should a problem persist.

Level Two

Level 2: Behaviours

Level 2 behaviours are those that seriously interfere with the orderly environment of the school and are potentially dangerous to the safety and wellbeing of the students and staff. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in level 2. Please note the list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated instances of level 1 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention
- Behaviour which is dangerous to self or others (e.g. shoving, pushing, hitting)
- Intentionally damaging school or personal property
- Stealing
- Cheating
- Use of profanity
- Derogatory reference to another person's race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability, or ethnic origin
- Disrespectful language or behaviour toward an adult
- Possession or use of dangerous toys or sporting equipment (e.g. bow and arrows, any kind of knives, etc.)

Level 2: Disciplinary Actions

The disciplining of students for Level 2 behaviour is dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour and developmentally appropriate levels. The disciplinary actions at Level 2 are administered by the Principal, and include the formal notification of parents, with written documentation. Some examples of Level 2 responses are:

- In school supervised detention
- Report submitted to the Board of Management
- Meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Suspension from school of one to five days depending on the severity of the behaviour
- Implementation of extensive behaviour management plan

Level 2: Supportive Interventions

Listed below are some examples of Level 2 supportive actions:

- Team conference to include classroom teacher, other involved staff, Principal.
- Request for assistance from external agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education.
- Referral of a child displaying behavioural problems for psychological assessment (with the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent).

Level Three

Level 3: Behaviours

Level 3 behaviours are considered the most serious violations. These behaviours endanger the immediate health, safety and personal wellbeing of the pupils and staff of the school. They represent a direct threat to the orderly operation of the school environment. Situations, which include illegal activity, may result in contact with the Garda Síochána after parental involvement. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 3. Please note that the list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated or serious instances of Level 2 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention.
- Setting fires
- Intentional possession or use of weapons
- Violent fighting or intentionally causing physical harm to others
- Discriminatory or prejudicial activities toward another person or group involving race, gender, religion, physical condition, handicap or ethnic origin.

Level 3: Disciplinary Actions

Behaviour at Level 3 may involve suspension from school. The length of the suspension will depend upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Specific information about due process and procedures in respect of the issuing of a suspension is contained in this document. Level 3 responses:

- **Suspension from school for one to five days:**
This response will occur with the first incidence of Level 3 behaviour or Level 2 behaviour of significant severity. The Principal following due process and procedure, can issue a suspension.
- **Suspension from school for five to ten days:**
This response will occur with the repeated incidence of Level 3 behaviour or a severe expression of this Behaviour. A suspension of this magnitude will only be issued with the approval of the Board of Management.
- **Expulsion:**
Repeated incidents of Level 3 behaviour can result in a pupil being expelled.

PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSIONS & EXPULSIONS

Suspension

Definition of Suspension:

‘Requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days’

Authority to Suspend:

The Board of Management of **Ballyfinane National School** has formally and in writing delegated the authority to impose an ‘Immediate Suspension’ to the Principal Teacher. An ‘Immediate Suspension’ may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

Furthermore, the Board of Management has formally and in writing delegated the Principal Teacher the authority to impose an 'Automatic Suspension' for named behaviours detailed in this policy. An Automatic Suspension may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

The Board retains the authority to suspend a student in all other cases/circumstances.

Immediate Suspension and Automatic Suspension

An 'Immediate Suspension' will be deemed to be necessary where after a preliminary investigation the Principal reaches the determination that the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety and wellbeing of pupils or staff of the school. An 'Immediate Suspension' may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

An 'Automatic Suspension' is a suspension imposed for named behaviours. The Board of Management of **Ballyfinane National School**, having given due consideration to its duty of care as prescribed by Health & Safety Legislation, has determined that the following named behaviours will incur 'Automatic Suspension' as a sanction;

- Physical assault/violence resulting in bodily harm to a pupil or member of staff
- Or
- Physical violence resulting in serious damage to school property

An Automatic Suspension may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be informed of an Immediate or Automatic Suspension by telephone, and arrangements will be made with them for the pupil to be collected. In no circumstances will a student be sent home from school prior to his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) being notified. Formal written notification of the suspension will issue in due course, but no later than 2 school days after the imposition of the suspension. Such a notification will detail:

- The duration of the suspension and the date on which the suspension will begin and end
- The reasons for the suspension
- Any study programme to be followed
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s)

The Board of Management acknowledges that the decision to impose either an Immediate or Automatic Suspension does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures. In this regard, and following a normal investigation, to be completed no later than 2 school days after the incident in the Board of Management will invite the pupil and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) to a meeting to discuss;

- The circumstances surrounding the suspension,
- Interventions to prevent a reoccurrence of such misconduct.

The Board of Management of **Ballyfinane National School** acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation process. In this regard the following undertaking is given;

- i. No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure.

Procedures in Respect of Other Suspensions

In cases other than those of Immediate or Automatic Suspension the following procedures will apply; Where a preliminary assessment of the fact confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the Board of Management of **Ballyfinane National School** will initiate a formal investigation of the matter.

The following procedures will be observed;

A written letter containing the following information will issue to parent(s)/guardian(s);

- I. Details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in suspension.
- II. An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than five school days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond before a decision is made or a sanction imposed.

The Board of Management of **Ballyfinane National School** acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given:

- i. No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process.
- ii. The person(s) involved in the investigation process will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision-making process.

Where a decision to suspend has been made the Chairperson of the Board of Management will provide written notification to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the pupil of the decision.

The letter will confirm:

- The duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- The reasons for the suspension
- Any study programme to be followed
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s)
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management

Where a suspension brings the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

Expulsion

Definition of Expulsion

'A student is expelled from a school when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.'

Authority to Expel

The authority to expel a pupil is reserved by the Board of Management.

Procedures in Respect of Expulsion

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion the following will apply:

a) A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal (or a Nominee of the Board if required)

As part of the investigation a written letter containing the following information will issue to parent(s)/guardian(s);

- i. Details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in expulsion.
- ii. An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than 5 school days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond

b) The Principal (or BoM nominee) will make a recommendation to the Board of Management

Where the Principal (or nominee) forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal (or nominee) makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion.

In this event the Principal (or nominee) will:

- i. Inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- ii. Ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) have records of the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- iii. Provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parent(s)/guardian(s)(Appendix 3)

c) Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's(or BoM's nominee) recommendations and the Holding of a Hearing

If, having considered the Principal's report, the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student hearing will be scheduled.

The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing

- i. As to the date, location and time of the hearing
- ii. Of their right to make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- iii. That they may if they so choose to be accompanied at the hearing

The Board of Management undertakes that the timing of such written notification will ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

In respect of the expulsion hearing the Board gives an undertaking that;

- i. The meeting will be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures
- ii. The principal (or BoM nominee) and parent(s)/guardian(s) will present their case to the Board in each other's presence
- iii. Each party will be given the opportunity to directly question the evidence of the other party
- iv. The parent(s)/guardian(s) may make a case for lesser sanction if they chose

d) Board of Management Deliberators & Actions following the hearing

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the pupil should be expelled the Board:

- i. Will notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing by registered post of its opinion, and the reasons for its opinion
- ii. Will not expel the student before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the Educational Welfare Officer receives this written notification
- iii. Will in writing notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their decision and inform them that the Educational Welfare Officer is being contacted
- iv. Will be represented at the consultation to be organized by the Educational Welfare Officer

- v. Will suspend the student, if it is deemed likely that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils or staff.

e) Confirmation of the Decision to Expel

Where the **twenty-day period** following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing that the expulsion will now proceed. They will also be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

The Board of Management of **Ballyfinane National School** acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process; in this regard the following undertakings are given:

- i. No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process
 - ii. The person(s) involved in the investigation will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision-making process.
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INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES

The Board of Management has, under guidance from the Department of Education, implemented a number of measures intended to control the spread of Covid-19 and other infections as directed. These measures are detailed in the school's response plan and the Covid-19 risk assessment.

All pupils are required to comply with any Infection control measures that the school has in place.

These measures may change from time to time, according to advice received from the Department of Education and the public health authorities. Any changes will be communicated to parents. Pupils will be supported in adhering to the measures by their class teachers and other school personnel.

Pupils who persistently fail to comply with the measures may be subject to disciplinary action under this policy. Some behaviours that in the past may have incurred lesser sanctions may in light of COVID and deemed to incur greater sanction, e.g., spitting at someone.

Anti-bullying Policy

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 **Ballyfinane 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 by the Department of Education & Skills in September 2013.

Best Practice in the Prevention of Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management recognizes 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 behavior:

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

Definition of Bullying

In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows: Bullying is unwanted negative behavior, 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 behavior 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 behavior, 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 behavior.

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 behavior.

Negative behavior that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behavior.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, DES, 2013*.

Examples of bullying behaviours

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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" • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
Cyber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Face- book/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube 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 & Transgender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 & membership of the Traveller community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment

- 1. School Contact Personnel** - The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) The Class Teachers. *(see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):*
- 2. Education & Prevention Strategies** The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows: *(see Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools)*

School-wide approach

- *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.*
- *School wide awareness raising 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.*
- *Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school- displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.*
- *The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils each year and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour on enrolment.*
- *The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school on the promotion of friendship and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Day ; annual student*

surveys; regular school assemblies by principal or deputy principal.

- *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.:*
- *Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.*
- *Hand note up with homework.*
- *Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school*
- *Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.*
- *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 class teacher if they suspect that their child is being bullied.*
- *The continuation of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school which includes the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.*

Implementation of curricula

- *The full implementation of the SPHE, the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.*
- *Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programme. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardaí, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying*
- *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

- *Code of Behaviour,*
- *Attendance*
- *Child Protection policy,*
- *Supervision of pupils,*
- *Acceptable Use policy,*

INVESTIGATION & FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behavior and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behavior are as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools). **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); 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)/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), 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: STYLE OF APPROACH (SEE SECTION 6.8.9)

- 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 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 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;
- 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. 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;
- 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.

FOLLOW UP & 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) 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 (not because they disagree with the outcome), 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. 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 incidents witnessed in the yard are to be recorded in the Incident Book.
- 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 parents of both parties are to be notified as soon as possible

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.

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour 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. The recording template must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal.

Established intervention strategies

- Teacher interviews all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis.
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
- Circle Time

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. If pupils require counselling or further school supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. 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.

- Agreed appropriate monitoring and supervision practices are in the school
- Bullying danger spots have been identified
- Parents and pupils will be consulted in the identification of these danger spots
- Senior pupils will be trained by the staff to be vigilant for signs of bullying in the yard and to report their findings
- The Acceptable Use Policy in the school will address the following issues:
 - All Internet sessions are supervised by a teacher
 - The school regularly monitors pupils' Internet usage
 - Pupils have been instructed to use only approved class accounts for email purposes and to use these only under teacher supervision
 - Pupils have been instructed to access only those chat rooms, discussion forums and messaging or other electronic communication fora that have been approved by the school?

(Note that the Schools Broadband Programme has blocked all social networking sites on the basis that they waste time and take up too much of the bandwidth which is been provided for educational purposes only).

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.

1. 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.
2. 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 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.

Appendix 3

1. Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and Class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

Name/s _____
Class/es _____
Date _____ Time: _____

3. Source of Bullying concern/report (tick relevant box/es)

Pupil Concerned	
Other pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incident (tick relevant box/es)

Yard	
Field	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concerns

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6. Type of Bullying

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	Traveller Community	Other

8. Brief description of the bullying and its impact

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9. Actions taken/Follow Up

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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?	X
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	X
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	X
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?	✓ N/A
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	X
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	✓

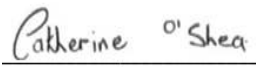
NOTIFICATION REGARDING THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT'S ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The Board of Management of **Ballyfinane National School** wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation 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*.

Date of Review	Date of Review	Date of Review	Date of review
2020	2021	2022	22/03/2023

Signed: 
Mike Carroll
Chairperson of B.O.M.

 Signed:
Catherine O'Shea
Principal

Date: 29/03/23

Date: 29/03/23