

Bailieborough Community School Personal Safety 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 Bailieborough Community School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013. The scope of this policy is for student(s) bullying student(s).**

- 2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:**
 - **A positive school culture and climate which - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity; encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment and promotes respectful relationships across the school community**
 - **Effective leadership**
 - **A school-wide approach**
 - **A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact**
 - **Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils and explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.**
 - **Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**
 - **Supports for staff**
 - **Consistent recording, investigating and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)**
 - **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
- 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 will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

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

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

4. A pupil or parent/guardian/carer or member of the non-teaching staff may bring a bullying concern to any member of the teaching staff in the school. The concern will be briefly recorded on the white *BCS Template for Bullying Concern (s)* by the teaching staff member. He or she will exercise his/her professional judgement in determining whether or not bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved. They can do this at their own discretion or by referring it to a member of the Personal Safety Committee. The names of the relevant teachers are outlined in the Personal Safety Committee Members flow chart on the inserted page.
5. 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:

- **Bailieborough Community School makes it clear to all members of the school community that bullying of any kind is unacceptable, irrespective of whether it is a student, a staff member or any other person that is the subject of such behaviour.**

- **While when investigating and dealing with bullying the principal focus is on resolving differences and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved rather than apportioning blame, Bailieborough Community School nevertheless reserves the right to take disciplinary action, where such is warranted, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour, against those who bully others.**

- **The awareness and prevention of bullying is integral to this policy and students will, through both their curricular and extra-curricular programmes, be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth and self-respect.**

- **The focus of Bailieborough Community School's prevention strategy will be to build empathy, respect and resilience in students.**

- **Students will be provided with opportunities to understand the causes and effects of bullying, the issue of identity-based bullying and in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying. This will include the display of Lesbian/ Gay/ Bisexual/ Transgender posters and discussions with parents about statements of welcome and respect for LGBT members of the school community, teaching the Social, Personal, Health Education (SPHE) resource, *Growing Up LGBT* and participating in LGBT awareness events.**
 - a/ **Bailieborough Community School recognises that the SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme provides opportunities to explore and discuss areas such as human sexuality and relationships, which has particular relevance to identity-based**

bullying. The Cool School Programme is delivered to all Junior Cycle students during Friendship & Anti-Bullying Week and revisited at subsequent intervals in order to clarify the school's policy, procedures and sanctions in relation to bullying behaviour(s). The learner outcomes of the Cool School lessons are to create an awareness of what constitutes bullying, types of bullying behaviour, effects of bullying, role of bystanders, asking for help, how to tell and making a class agreement on standing up to bullying. Bailieborough Community School will make every reasonable effort to ensure that the full potential of these programmes to combat bullying is exploited.

b/ The school is committed to exploring during 2015 the potential of the *Schools for Health in Ireland Framework* to assist it in ensuring that Bailieborough Community School is inclusive, welcoming of diversity and addresses these issues effectively in the interests of all members of the school community.

c/ Furthermore, it is recognised that there is potential within the teaching of all subjects and within extra-curricular activities to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

- Prevention and awareness raising measures will also deal explicitly with cyber-bullying through educating students about appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also through developing a culture of reporting any concerns about or incidents of bullying to a member of the teaching staff or trusted adult.**
- Bailieborough Community School will, in all its communications with students and their parents, commencing with the information night for incoming first year students & their parents and during the induction of these students into the school, make every effort to highlight the importance of students reporting incidents of or concerns about bullying to a member of the teaching staff on the clear understanding that these matters are being reported in confidence. More than anything else, the combating of bullying will depend on the extent to which students note and report bullying. In this context, the happiness of students is very much dependent on the vigilance of their fellow students and their preparedness &**

confidence to report concerns about bullying to the teaching staff and/or school management. All members of the teaching staff will reinforce this point to students on an on-going basis and emphasise that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but behaving responsibly.

- **Bailieborough Community School will adopt a school-wide approach (involving management, staff, parents, students and members of the wider community with a connection to the school) to prevent and combat bullying. In this context, the school is committed to engaging with parents.**

Firstly the school will involve them in the development of policies and practices to combat bullying. Secondly the school will hold annual information evenings for parents to ensure that they understand the way the school deals with bullying, and to provide them with reliable information on how they may contribute towards combating bullying. In this regard, it is important that parents realise that anyone can be a bully and anyone can be a target of bullying. It is not just other people's sons and daughters that can bully. At the same time, it is important to realise that disagreements between young people are part and parcel of negotiating the road to adulthood and that every youthful disagreement should not be treated as a full-blown bullying episode. The Parents' Association will work in partnership with the school in the organisation of this annual event.

- **In accordance with 6.8.9 of Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying in the DES *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* "parents and students are expected 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."**
- **The School will establish links with school bus drivers and others who come in daily contact with its students in order to enlist them in countering bullying behaviour by reporting it to parents and/or the school.**

- Where necessary the school will seek the assistance of NEPS, the HSE and the Gardaí, as appropriate, to combat bullying.

- In combating bullying, the school will take particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with special educational needs. This will involve supporting inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying particular attention to student induction through “Moving On Day” and cultivating a school culture that respects everyone and values helping one another.

- The school will host a staff development session (for teaching and non-teaching staff as appropriate) each school year with a view to: raising the awareness of bullying among staff, building an understanding of what bullying is and providing guidance on how it is best combated-prevented, detected, investigated, documented (as appropriate) and resolved. This session will also provide opportunities for exploring the potential that exists within the teaching of all subjects and within extra-curricular activities to foster an attitude of respect for all, to promote the value of diversity, to address prejudice and stereotyping, and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. A clear focus of all staff development around combating bullying will be the enablement of all staff to implement this policy and the *DES Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* consistently and effectively.

- Bailieborough Community School is committed to devoting a continuous professional development session each year to building the capacity of the school to combat bullying.

- Bailieborough Community School is committed to surveying the student body annually to identify the extent of bullying.

- The school’s RSE and SPHE programmes will specifically address the issue of bullying with each year group on a yearly basis.

- **Bailieborough Community School will hold a Friendship & Anti-Bullying Awareness Week and a Safe Internet Awareness Day once a year to highlight the whole issue of bullying and staying safe using modern technology.**
 - **The members of the Student Council as well as the school's senior students will have a specific responsibility for recognising bullying behaviour, for bringing concerns about bullying behaviour to the attention of a teacher or trusted adult and for supporting vulnerable students in relation to bullying.**
- 6. The relevant teachers investigating and dealing with bullying incidents in Bailieborough Community School will use a restorative approach guided by the following principles:**
- **focuses on rebuilding relationships rather than blame or punishment**
 - **confronts and disapproves of wrongdoing and holds student accountable whilst supporting & valuing his/her inherent worth**
 - **victim's harm/loss is acknowledged, his/her perception is accepted and he/she is listened to**
 - **victim's experiences, feelings and needs are respected**
 - **all participants are given an opportunity to tell their story**
 - **person causing the harm is given an opportunity to understand and repair the harm**
 - **wrongdoer is given an opportunity to hear how their behaviour impacted on the victim in a safe and respectful forum**
 - **all are encouraged to learn and move forward from their experience**

When investigating and dealing with bullying incidents in Bailieborough Community School the relevant teachers will adhere to the following procedures:

- **they will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents**
- **they will investigate incidents in so far as possible in a manner that ensures the privacy of all involved.**

- they will conduct interviews with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned; students who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way
- they will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with conflict in a non-aggressive manner
- if a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first, thereafter as a group, where they will be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements
- each group member will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview
- if helpful or appropriate, those involved may be asked to write down their account of the incident(s)
- in cases where the relevant teacher has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred and concluded his/her investigation, the parents of the parties involved may be contacted to inform them of the matter and to explain the actions being taken according to school policy
- parents will be given an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils
- where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try and get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied
- where disciplinary sanctions are required, it will be made clear that this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school
- follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will 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
- in cases where the relevant teacher in consultation with the PSC co-ordinator considers that the bullying behaviour has not been addressed adequately and appropriately - within 20 school days after he/she determined that bullying behaviour had occurred - this will be recorded on the red *BCS Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour(s)/Concern(s)*
- in determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed, the relevant teacher in consultation with the PSC co-ordinator must as part of his/her professional judgement take into account whether the bullying behaviour has ceased; whether any

issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable and whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable. They must also take into account any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents and/or the deputy principal/principal.

- where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, by the principal to the school's complaints procedures
- in the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, parents will be advised by the school of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children

The procedures for recording bullying behaviour at Bailieborough Community School consist of:

- The member of the teaching staff or the PSC member keeps a record of all bullying reports (including anonymous reports of bullying), the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same. A copy will be placed in the student's file and the original is retained for their own individual file.
- The PSC member(s) investigate(s) all completed white *BCS Template for Bullying Concern(s)* on receipt. A copy will be placed in the student's file and the original is retained for the PSC member's own file.
- Any member of the teaching staff or the PSC committee will use the red hardback in the PSC Co-ordinator's pigeon hole to enter: their own name, the date, the names of those involved and whether the white, pink or red template was used.
- If it is established that bullying has occurred, the PSC member will complete the pink BCS Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour(s)/ Concern(s) to assist with his/her efforts in resolving the issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. The Year leader will be informed at this stage and be provided with a copy of the completed pink form.
- In cases where the PSC member, in consultation with the PSC co-ordinator, considers that the bullying behaviour has not been addressed adequately and appropriately - within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred - this will be recorded on the red BCS Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour(s)/ Concern(s) and a copy will be presented to the principal in addition to the year leader.

- In exceptional circumstances, where the bullying behaviour poses a serious risk to the health & safety of any of the parties involved it must be recorded on the red *BCS Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour(s)/ Concern(s)* immediately and reported instantly to the principal, and in the event of her absence to the deputy principal.

7. Bailieborough Community School's Programme of Support for working with pupils affected by bullying and for pupils involved in bullying behaviour consists of:

- access to counselling services
- access to chaplaincy services
- participation in the First Year Social Skills Group
- participation in sport and physical activity
- involvement in lunchtime and after school activities of an extra- and/or co-curricular nature in order to increase school connectedness, raise self-esteem, develop friendship & social skills, build resilience, deal with difficult situations
- ongoing liaison with the relevant subject teachers, class tutor, year leader, chaplain, counsellor and members of the Personal Safety Committee
- regular communication between home and school by phone, e-mail, letter or face to face
- seeking and appreciating constructive parental involvement
- referral to outside agencies such as Children & Family Services in HSE, Gardai, NEPS, SESS, NCGE ... for specialised support/advice and in cases where an interdisciplinary approach is required

8. The Board of Management of Bailieborough Community School 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 of Bailieborough Community School 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

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website www.bailieborocs.ie and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Patrons 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 and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Patrons and the Department.

Signed: _____

(Chairperson Board of Management)

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date: _____