

BAILIEBOROUGH COMMUNITY SCHOOL



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY 2023-2024

1. Introduction

Bullying behaviour, by its very nature, undermines and dilutes the quality of education. Research shows that bullying can have short and long-term effects on the physical and mental wellbeing of students, on engagement with school, on self-confidence and on the ability to pursue ambitions and interests.

School based bullying can be positively and firmly addressed through a range of school-based measures and strategies through which all members of the school community are enabled to act effectively in dealing with this behaviour.

Parents and students have a particularly important role in helping Bailieborough Community School to prevent and address school-based bullying behaviour. They also have a responsibility for dealing with any negative impact within Bailieborough Community School of bullying that occurs elsewhere.

2. Context and Rationale of Policy

In accordance with the requirements of the Education Welfare Act 2000, the Code of Behaviour Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB), the publication in December 2022 of *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* followed by *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying Implementation Plan 2023-2027*, 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.

The policy is founded on the following documents:

- Education Welfare Act (2000)
- Equal Status Acts (2000–2004)
- Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools as published by the National Educational Welfare Board (2008)
- Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013) as published by the Department of Education and Skills
- DES Circular Letter 0045/2013
- DES Circular Letter 0033/2021
- **Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice**
- Cineáltas; Action Plan on Bullying: Ireland's Whole Education Approach to Preventing and Addressing Bullying in Schools
- **Cineáltas; Action Plan on Bullying: Implementation Plan 2023-2027**

This policy fully complies with the provisions of all relevant legislation and with the Anti-Bullying Guidelines for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)

3. Scope of Policy

The scope of this policy is for student(s) bullying student(s).

"It is important to recognise that any student can be bullied or can engage in bullying behaviour". (DES, 2013)

Parents have a responsibility to recognise the potential of all students to engage in bullying behaviours.

All members of the school community have a role and responsibility in helping Bailieborough Community School to prevent and address school-based bullying behaviour and to deal with any negative impact within school of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere.

Bullying behaviour that occurs outside of BCS and does not have an impact in school (e.g. online, in neighbourhoods, sports clubs, within families etc) is outside the scope of this policy.

However, parents/guardians are encouraged to contact the school with any concerns - regardless of whether they fall within the scope of this policy or not - they have relating to the holistic development of their child.

The school policies listed below are of particular relevance in this regard:

- Admissions Policy
- Attendance Strategy
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Child Protection Procedures

- Acceptable Use Policy and Distance & Blended Learning Policy
- Critical Incident Management Plan
- Guidance Plan
- **Cultural Diversity & Anti-Racism Policy**
- Wellbeing Policy Statement & Framework for Practice
- Relationships & Sexuality Education Policy

4. Commitment to Key Principles of Best Practice

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- a) A positive school culture and climate which:
 - is founded on an ethic of **care, safety and respect**
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
 - encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
 - promotes **respectful relationships** across the school community.
 - acknowledges the importance of student voice.
- b) Effective leadership
- c) A school-wide approach
- d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that:
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in students
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying, in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying
 - create opportunities for developing an understanding of the impact of negative behaviour on others
- f) Effective supervision and monitoring of students
- g) Supports for staff
- h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour – including the use of established intervention strategies
- i) Ongoing evaluation of the anti-bullying policy's effectiveness

5. 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 students or staff or the harassment of students 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 **and/or Roma** community.

Bullying and Harassment will not be tolerated in Bailieborough Community School. Under the anti-bullying policy, breaches may be referred to be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour. This will include the full range of sanctions of the Code of Behaviour, up to and including suspension and exclusion.

In situations where an incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the matter will be referred to the Designated Liaison Person. (DLP)

6. Definitions of Bullying and Cyberbullying

It is common in the course of normal interaction for students to tease and challenge each other. Teenagers struggle to find their place in the world and sometimes want to impress their peers. They can say hurtful things and behave in hurtful ways. They may be insensitive to the feelings of others at times. They can also behave very differently in groups than they do as individuals, especially if they have an appreciative audience.

In most interactions, there is a balance of power between parties, and therefore no culpability.

However, at a certain point, usually when there is an imbalance of power between parties, teasing and challenging may become forms of bullying behaviour.

Bullying has three core elements:

- 1. Targeted Behaviour**
- 2. Repeated Behaviour**
- 3. Imbalance of Power**

(Cineáltas; Action Plan on Bullying: Ireland's Whole Education Approach to Preventing and Addressing Bullying in Schools p.21)

6.1. Bullying

Bullying is targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in this non-exhaustive 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 and/or Roma community and bullying of those with disabilities or additional educational needs

Both Irish and international research shows that physical appearance is the most common reason for being bullied, with race, nationality and skin colour as the second most common reason.

(Kuldas, Foody, O'Higgins Norman, 2022 on p.12 of Cineáltas; Action Plan on Bullying: Ireland's Whole Education Approach to Preventing and Addressing Bullying in Schools)

Whilst we note this evidence, it does not reflect the reality on the ground at BCS where relational and cyber bullying are the two most common types of bullying behaviours encountered..

Although the definition states that the behaviour is usually repeated over time, a once-off/isolated incident can be regarded as bullying. For example:

- placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement in 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.

Isolated incidents 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 DES definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour (if relevant)

6.2. Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is targeted behaviour, using electronic means, that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.

There are some differences between bullying and cyberbullying that are worth noting.

With cyberbullying there is no way for the bully to see the victim's immediate response to an attack, potentially lessening the impact it has on the bully. Research suggests that the potential for the bully to feel remorse or guilt for their actions is blunted. They spend less time thinking about, or are unaware of, the consequences of their bullying (Renati, Berrone and Zanetti, 2012; Sahin, 2012)

Online bullies can remain anonymous. Anonymity is one of the most disturbing aspects of cyber bullying and can inhibit the investigation process. Cyberbullies

have 24/7 access to the victim, it doesn't stop at the school gates. There is also the potential to have a large audience to the online incidents of bullying (Gleeson, 2014) thus magnifying the impact it has on the victim.

This table clarifies the differences between traditional and cyberbullying and may be helpful

Criteria	Traditional Bullying	Cyberbullying
Intention	To harm, upset or embarrass.	As perceived by the victim. Impact on victim with or without conscious intention of aggressor.
Repetition	Occurs frequently over time.	Need occur only once but can be viewed by numerous others repeatedly or forwarded to others indefinitely.
Power Imbalance	Victim has less power due to physical or psychological factors or isolation.	Less clear. May be due to higher social status or higher level of proficiency in technology.
Anonymity	Not usually an issue.	Nature of social media that aggressors can often remain anonymous creating a power imbalance for the victim.
Publicity	Public acts of bullying seen as most severe form of traditional bullying.	Acts can involve a large audience – e.g. public forums, video or pictures distributed through social networking.

7. Different Types of Bullying and Cyberbullying

The following are some of the types of bullying that can occur amongst students:

Type	Explanation & Specific Examples of Behaviour (non-exhaustive)
Physical Aggression	Pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking, tripping people, inflicting pain...etc. Severe Physical Assault.
Intimidation	Very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.
Isolation/Exclusion	This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of a group. (This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be very difficult to detect.) Other accompanying behaviours include; writing insulting remarks about a student in public places, passing around notes about or drawings of the student, whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard...etc.
Relational Bullying	This occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. This can happen by the student(s) engaged in the bullying behaviour controlling friendships, non-verbal gesturing, malicious

	gossip, spreading rumours about a person, giving a person the 'silent treatment',...etc.
Cyberbullying	This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, email, instant messaging, apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies.
Name calling	Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates e.g. with reference to physical appearance, accent, distinctive characteristics...etc.
Damage to property	Damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books, learning materials, pupils locker, bicycle...etc.
Extortion	Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.
Identity-Based	Bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller and/or Roma community and bullying of those with disabilities or additional educational needs.

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

This table explains the many different types of cyberbullying that may occur between students:

Behaviour	Description
Flaming	Argumentative, abusive or insulting exchanges, between two individuals or groups online.
Harassment	Repetitive posting of threatening or offensive messages sent to or about a target individual.
Denigration	Posting or sharing information about another that is untrue or derogatory.
Impersonation	Gaining access to another person's online account and posing as them to post negative or humiliating information in the guise of that person.
Outing and Trickery	Sharing personal and embarrassing information about another online, can be in the form of pictures or videos.
Exclusion or Ostracism	Actively excluding or 'defriending' another from online social groups.
Happy Slapping	Uploading digital recordings of assaults on targeted individuals for others to see.

8. Impacts of Bullying Behaviours

Student	Possible Impacts may include:
Students who are being bullied	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ May develop feelings of insecurity, humiliation and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable.➤ Lowering of self-esteem.➤ Changes in mood and behaviour➤ Extreme cases may result in self-harm.
Students who witness bullying	Students who witness bullying may also be affected and may suffer in similar ways to those who are bullied. For example, students who witness identity-based bullying and share that identity can experience anxiety and feel under threat themselves. Students may also feel guilt or distress at not being able to help the person being bullied.
Students who engage in bullying behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Can be at higher risk of depression➤ Increased risk of developing an anti-social personality➤ Anxiety disorders➤ Likelihood of substance abuse, law-breaking behaviour in adulthood, decreased educational attainment, decreased occupational attainment...etc.

Students who are cyberbullied show similar negative impacts to those who experience traditional bullying; depression, anxiety, psychosomatic problems, academic problems, poor relationships, self-harm and suicide ideation. Cyberbullies can experience depression, poor empathy, suicide ideation and behavioural issues.

Cyberbully-victims (bullies who become the bullied) are at risk of the most severe emotional, psychological and social problems experienced by either bullies or victims and tend to be rejected by their peers more than the other people affected by bullying. (Gleeson, 2014)

Bystanders may also be affected by their action/inaction around bullying.

Bystanders are those who witness the bullying and who may or may not intervene.

In terms of cyberbullying, bystanders are the ones who receive forwarded messages, posts or pictures. They may visit social media or websites where messages etc. have been posted or they could be with the victim when they receive the messages/posts/pictures etc.

Unfortunately this group tends not to act. (Gleeson, 2014)

They may not act because they blame the victims for the way they were behaving online. The cyberbullies may be popular and have high levels of social dominance and bystanders don't have the confidence to challenge them or they may not see it as being of a serious nature and not feel the need to intervene. They may also fear becoming targets themselves or not having the support from the larger peer group.

Additional information on the indicators of bullying behaviour as well as the characteristics associated with bullying can be found in Sections Three and Four of the Anti – Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post – Primary Schools (DES, 2013)

9. BCS Personal Safety Team

A student, parent/guardian, non-teaching staff member, visitor, bus driver or community member may bring a bullying concern to any staff member in the school or highlight it via the reporting tool on the school website.

The relevant teachers will investigate and deal with the concern.

See Appendix A: BCS PERSONAL SAFETY TEAM FLOW CHART

with the names of the relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying concerns.

The term ‘relevant teacher’ is used by the DES to describe the persons specifically responsible for investigating and dealing with alleged bullying behaviour.

A relevant teacher will investigate an allegation or concern, decide whether the behaviour is bullying in nature and deal with bullying behaviour. They will support the students and parents to the best of their ability.

The primary aim of the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationship of the parties involved. (rather than to apportion blame) (DES 2013)

The BCS Personal Safety Team consists of the relevant teachers, the guidance counsellor, the chaplain, the deputy principal and the principal.

Their specific roles and responsibilities are outlined below:

Relevant Teachers:

- listen, read and consider each bullying concern
- investigate alleged bullying incidents
- consult with any staff member or other persons during the course of their investigation in order to seek guidance or additional information
- exercise their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved
- resolve any issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than apportion blame)
- complete forms and keep records
- liaise with the personal safety team
- liaise with the students and parents
- seek data on the effectiveness of the policy and its implementation
- decide post–investigation, whether allegations of negative behaviour or bullying concerns fall under the definition of bullying
- take follow–up actions required to intervene in cases of bullying
- report any concerns where a particular episode of bullying causes serious upset to a student at the earliest opportunity to the principal/deputy principal

- participate and assist with events, themed weeks, performances, speakers, projects, displays and lessons to highlight the anti-bullying policy and procedures to the whole school e.g. Friendship & Personal Safety Month
- attend personal safety focus groups/ meetings

Guidance Counsellor:

- offer appropriate support and counselling to students who have been bullied
- work on and encourage participation in activities designed to raise self esteem, develop social skills and build resilience
- actively promote and participate in personal safety team initiatives
- encourage students who observe incidents of bullying behaviour to discuss them and avail of counselling/care team support where they feel it may assist them to cope effectively with what they have experienced

Chaplain:

- provide support to students engaged in bullying behaviours and help them to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others
- work on and encourage participation in activities designed to raise self-esteem, develop social skills and build their feelings of self-worth
- to actively promote and participate in personal safety team initiatives

Principal:

- develop, implement, monitor and review the anti-bullying policy
- apply Code of Behaviour when necessary
- report to the Board of Management re. anti-bullying (termly and annually)
- maximise opportunities provided by the school curriculum to raise awareness, foster an attitude of respect for all and influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive way: e.g. choice of text for English, SPHE, CSPE, RSE, PE, WELLBEING
- support and lead initiatives with the personal safety team
- consult with and seek assistance from external agencies (NEPS, HSE, social worker, community worker, bus drivers, gardai, ...) where necessary
- make referrals to TUSLA as designated liaison person for child protection in cases of severe bullying

10. Education and Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies – including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including particularly homophobic and transphobic bullying – that will be used by Bailieborough Community 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. In this context, all members of the school community have a duty to model appropriate behaviour and to bring to the attention of the relevant teacher, chaplain, guidance counsellor, deputy principal or principal any incident of bullying, cyberbullying or harassment that they know about or suspect.
- While, when investigating and dealing with bullying, the primary 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, (up to and including suspension and exclusion) where such action is warranted, in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour, against those who bully others. The Code of Behaviour places great emphasis on the right of each student to come to school to pursue his/her education without interference, bullying or intimidation. At the start of each academic year and at regular intervals thereafter, students are reminded of this right as well as the principle of respect that lies at the heart of all we do. Tutors, assistant year leaders and year leaders take a pro-active role in familiarising students with their individual responsibilities in this regard. These responsibilities are outlined in the code of behaviour section on pages five (point p) and seven (points a to e) of the student journal. Throughout their time at Bailieborough Community School, these responsibilities are revisited, communicated, taught and embedded across each year group and at school wide level.
- The awareness and prevention of bullying is integral to this policy and students will, through both their curricular, co-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. These skills are nurtured in every classroom, during co-curricular & extra-curricular activities and permeate the culture of the school.
- 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. Statements, flags and posters of welcome and respect for all, the teaching of the junior cycle SPHE short course, the RSE programme, the use of Belong To resources **where appropriate**, the wellbeing through art & LGBTQI+ awareness drop ins (facilitated by CAMRY, Ms Monaghan and Ms Mooney) will address the latter. Bailieborough Community School hosts an annual **Friendship & Personal Safety Month (November 2023)**. This month offers us an additional opportunity to check in with and value our LGBTQI+ students. Additional steps to make them feel safe and supportive are implemented

e.g. the creation of inclusive and welcoming meeting hubs, access to speakers from support organisations, up-to-date visual representations and the delivery of student led initiatives,...

LGBTQ+ students still face challenges, including; negative treatment, hearing homophobic remarks from members of the school community, school retention and completion concerns and unsafe spaces within schools (School Climate Survey, Belong To Youth Services, 2022). Of the 1208 LGBTQ+ students who completed the survey 76% indicated that they “feel unsafe in school”. BCS will survey how its LGBTQ+ students experience their school environment in terms of safety and support offered.

- Bailieborough Community School recognises that the SPHE programme and the first year & TY wellbeing modules make 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. Independent Learning Classes, Guidance, Religious Education, PE and CSPE further enhance this provision. Bailieborough Community School will make every reasonable effort to ensure that the full potential of these programmes to combat bullying is maximised.

Furthermore, it is recognised that there is potential within the teaching of all subjects and within extra-curricular & co-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 staff or via the Reporting Tool on our school website.
- An annual workshop on Cyberbullying, Online Safety and Consent is rolled out to all sixteen junior cycle and four LCA classes in the school by our community gardai Lisa Stevens and Vinny Connelly. (November 27th, 28th & 29th 2023)
- An anti-bullying & online behaviour workshop which forms part of the Cavan 365 Garda Youth Diversion Project is delivered by Sharon Ivers to our sixth year students. (December 4th 2023)
- The school celebrates Safer Internet Day (Tuesday 6th February in 2024) each year and involves its Safety Ambassadors in informing, educating and reinforcing the importance of the school's Acceptable User and Distance & Blended Learning policies, Online Gaming & Dangers, Account Buying & Sharing, Social Media, Cyber-bullying and Smart Tips to Beat the Cyberbullies. This content is revisited in May 2024.

- Bailieborough Community School holds an annual Friendship and Personal Safety Month to nurture positive relationships and highlight the issue of personal safety.
- An annual friendship retreat for second year students is facilitated by Alison Holton and Francis Keaney. (January 2024)
- Bailieborough Community School will, in all its communications with students, commencing with the induction of the student into BCS, make every effort to highlight the importance of students reporting incidents of, or concerns about, bullying to a member of staff on the clear understanding that these matters are being reported in confidence. This means that a student who draws a bullying concern to the attention of a staff member will not have his/her identity divulged in any way that might result in those against whom allegations are being made identifying the source of the report (as far as is practicable). More than anything else, the combatting of bullying will depend on the extent to which students note and report bullying. In this context, the wellbeing of students is very much dependent on the vigilance of their fellow students and their preparedness and confidence to report bullying concerns to the staff and/or school management or via the online tool. All teachers will reinforce this point to students on an on-going basis.
- 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 an information meeting for parents of incoming first year students to support parents and students in the transition from primary to post-primary education. Parents will be provided with an overview of the anti-bullying policy and practices at this meeting 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.
- In accordance with Section 6.8.9 of the 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 BOUNCE BACK YOUTH SERVICE, NEPS, HSE, CAVAN 365 PROJECT and the GARDAÍ, as appropriate to combat bullying, identify the perpetrators and support victims.
- In combating bullying, the school will take particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with additional educational needs. This will involve supporting inclusion, focusing on the development of 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 provide opportunities for professional dialogue and development for staff regarding bullying with a view to: understand what bullying is and provide guidance on how it is best combatted, prevented, detected, investigated, documented (as appropriate) and resolved. This dialogue will also provide opportunities for exploring the potential that exists within the teaching of all subjects and within extra-curricular and co-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.
- Bailieborough Community School is committed to devoting some professional time each year to building the capacity of the school to combat bullying. A clear focus of all staff development around combatting bullying will be the enablement of all staff to implement this policy, the DES Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools and Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying consistently and effectively. Members of the personal safety team will be provided with PDST refresher anti-bullying training in areas of investigation, reporting and resolution of incidents.
- Bailieborough Community School will keep up to date with the new resources and programmes offered through Webwise. Completion of the Oide Technology in Education & Webwise online course; Cyberbullying: Understanding, Preventing and Responding is encouraged.
- Bailieborough Community School is committed to surveying the student body annually to identify the extent of bullying and in so far as is practicable, the students that are affected by it.
- The members of the Student Voice Committee will have a specific role in bringing student concerns about bullying behaviour in BCS to the personal safety team, in providing feedback to them and in suggesting meaningful supports/interventions for vulnerable students in relation to bullying.
- The TY Wellbeing class and student council will assist in designing, reviewing and monitoring the policy’s implementation. TY wellbeing students will visit each of the first year classes and highlight & demonstrate the use of the reporting tool on the school website. They will

also deliver an age appropriate power point presentation outlining the key points of the school's anti-bullying policy to them.

- The mentors visit each of the independent learning classes in first year to provide peer support and establish an additional protective layer. They can assist with flagging and/or identifying bullying concerns amongst first year students as a result of their vigilance.
- Research and/or training regarding the potential of further embedding the Cyclone Theatre Company Bullying Prevention Session , Humourfit Workshops, Check & Connect Mentor Programme, Paula O'Connor's Don't Be Mean Behind Your Screen Presentation, Ger Brick Internet Safety... are ongoing.
- Other examples of educational and preventative strategies to combat bullying that have been implemented in 2023-2024 include:
 - The participation and completion of the Connection-Action-Inclusion Fuse Programme by all second year students
 - The provision of a broad and relevant curriculum that caters for the needs of our specific student cohort.
 - The school's pastoral care system and student support provided by the care team.
 - The school's timetable enabling each tutor to have an independent learning class from 8.50 until 9.02am every morning as well as a weekly SPHE class with their tutor group.
 - The organisation of the school day in classes of 58 minutes with separate breaks for 1st, 3rd, 5th and 2nd, 4th, 6th year students. The physical segregation of students at exit & entry points and allocation of specific areas/rooms during breaks. The above has prevented the erosion of tuition time, reduced interaction and movement at unstructured times and thus minimised the opportunities for bullying.
 - Awareness around personal safety and the implementation of this policy is raised through various communication channels: electronic screen in general area, daily notices, parental text system, school website, school face book page, displays, open night, parent information meetings, feeder primary school visits, induction days,...
 - Mental Health Awareness events including World Mental Health Day are celebrated each year.

11. Procedures for Reporting Bullying Behaviour

Students, parents, non-teaching staff, visitors, bus drivers or members of the wider community are welcome to bring any concerns re. bullying behaviour to a member of staff at Bailieborough Community School. The staff member will at the earliest opportunity inform the relevant teachers.

Alternatively, they can highlight the concern via the reporting tool on the school website and the PST co-ordinator will inform the relevant teachers at the earliest opportunity.

Every concern re. bullying behaviour that is reported will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teachers of the 2023-2024 BCS Personal Safety Team. (PST)

12. Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Bullying Behaviour

The procedures outlined below serve to guide relevant teachers through the process of investigating allegations of bullying behaviour.

Investigations can take a considerable amount of time.

- The relevant teacher(s) will gather as much information as possible re. the allegation of bullying behaviour. This involves speaking directly with the student who alleges the bullying behaviour. The student(s) will be requested to give a verbal and/or written account of the incident(s).
- The relevant teacher(s) will speak with the student(s) against whom the allegation of bullying behaviour has been made. The student(s) will be requested to give a verbal and/or written account of the incident(s).
- Allegations/incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation, where possible, to ensure the privacy of all involved.
However, given the fact that students and teachers are following full timetables, the student(s) may occasionally have to leave a lesson or be excused from a lesson to meet or speak with a relevant teacher.
This will be facilitated as discreetly as possible.
- Investigations will be conducted with sensitivity and due regard to the rights of all students concerned. (students who are not directly involved may also provide useful information)
- Relevant teacher(s) will seek answers to questions of:
WHAT?
WHERE?
WHEN?
WHO?
WHY?
in a calm manner, setting an example of how to deal with conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- Students will be reminded that when they provide information, they are behaving responsibly and that the wellbeing of other students is dependent upon them reporting bullying concerns.
- The relevant teacher(s) may consult with any staff member or other persons during the course of their investigation in order to seek guidance or additional relevant information.
- Where the relevant teacher is concerned that a particular allegation of bullying behaviour is causing serious upset to a student, staff member or other person, he or she should bring it to the attention of the principal at the earliest opportunity.

- The relevant teacher will complete the recording template PST 1 (white form) for investigating alleged bullying behaviour.
See Appendix B:
PST 1 RECORDING TEMPLATE FOR INVESTIGATING ALLEGED BULLYING BEHAVIOUR.
- The relevant teacher will exercise their professional judgement in determining whether bullying has occurred and how best to resolve the situation.
- Where the relevant teacher determines that bullying has not occurred, they will consult with the student's tutor and members of the care team in order to provide guidance and support.
- The relevant teacher will report on their investigation and decision to the year leader(s).
- If the relevant teacher determines that bullying behaviour has occurred they will complete the recording template PST 2 (pink form) for dealing with and following up on bullying behaviour.
See Appendix C:
PST 2 RECORDING TEMPLATE FOR DEALING WITH AND FOLLOWING UP ON BULLYING BEHAVIOUR.
- The relevant teacher will report on their decision to the year leader(s) and seek their input/assistance for dealing with the bullying.
- In the case of physical aggression or assault, the relevant teacher will inform the principal immediately.
- Forms must be completed in full and maintained in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation (GDPR).

13. Procedures and Strategies for Dealing with Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Bailieborough Community School adopts the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools issued by the Department of Education and Skills (September 2013) as the basis for the way in which the school addresses the issue of bullying. It also follows the Department's Roadmap for Preventing and Addressing Bullying (see page 22 of Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying)

The primary aim in dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved rather than to apportion blame.

Bailieborough Community School reserves the right to investigate allegations of bullying and to take disciplinary action, as required, where bullying is impinging on the work and wellbeing of a student in the school, even where the bullying behaviours are committed outside the school.

a. Procedure for Dealing With Bullying Behaviour

In any incident where it has been determined by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying has occurred:

- The relevant teacher will record the bullying behaviour and actions taken on the recording template PST 2 (pink form) for dealing with and following up on bullying behaviour.

See Appendix C:

PST 2 RECORDING TEMPLATE FOR DEALING WITH AND FOLLOWING UP ON BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- The relevant teacher will immediately report any incidents of serious physical assault, sexual assault or harassment to the principal.
A PST 3 recording template (red form) will be completed.
- The parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to outline the actions being taken in accordance with 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 as well as the help provided to their son/daughter(s).
- The relevant teacher will make it clear to the student engaged in bullying behaviour how he/she/they is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy. Efforts will be made to try and get him/her/them to see the situation from the perspective of the student being bullied.
- The relevant teacher will use their professional judgement in selecting the most appropriate evidence-based strategy to resolve issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- The relevant teacher may seek guidance or assistance from the personal safety team at any stage.
- The relevant teacher, in consultation with the personal safety team, will implement the chosen intervention strategy. It will be made clear to all involved parties that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, is a private matter between the student being disciplined, his/her/their parents and the school.
- As a follow-up after the implementation of an investigation strategy, the relevant teacher will meet separately with the parties involved to review and monitor progress.
- Subsequently and subject to the agreement and readiness of the student who has been bullied, will a further follow-up meeting in which the parties are brought together be organised.
- In determining whether bullying behaviour has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher, as part of their professional judgement, takes into account the following factors:
 1. Whether the bullying behaviour has stopped.
 2. Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable.

3. Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable.
 4. Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the year leader, deputy principal or principal.
- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after they determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher on the PST 3 recording template (red form)

See Appendix D:

PST 3 RECORDING TEMPLATE FOR REPORTING BULLYING
BEHAVIOUR TO THE PRINCIPAL/DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

The case must be referred to the personal safety team for further consultation and follow up. This may involve implementing a different intervention, applying the code of behaviour (up to and including suspension and expulsion) or referral of the case to the HSE or Gardaí.

- In any cases where the school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a student, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) may be sought.
- Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent/guardian 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 complaint procedures and is still not satisfied, parents will be advised by the school to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

b. Evidence-based Strategies for Dealing with Bullying Behaviour

There are a variety of approaches and intervention strategies that might be used in any given situation.

The Action Plan on Bullying published by the DES in 2013, highlighted the importance of schools identifying and consistently implementing evidence-based intervention strategies for dealing with cases of bullying.

Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, it is generally acknowledged that no one intervention works in all situations (DES, 2013).

The relevant teacher will decide on the intervention method that is best suited to each particular case.

This is why Bailieborough Community School has a specific personal safety team as it is important to research and understand both the techniques of intervention involved and the assumptions and rationale of particular methods.

The methods of intervention that will be used by Bailieborough Community School include:

1. The traditional disciplinary approach
2. Strengthening the victim
3. Mediation
4. Restorative Practice
5. The Support Group Method
6. The Method of Shared Concern.

See Appendix E:

FURTHER INFORMATION ON SIX MAJOR METHODS OF INTERVENTION

c. Referral of Serious Cases to the HSE

The school reserves the right, in accordance with Section 6.3.5 of the DES procedures to seek the assistance of other local persons and formal agencies such as the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS), the HSE, social workers, community workers and the Gardaí, where it deems such assistance is necessary for dealing effectively with bullying.

In any case where the school deems bullying behaviour to be potentially abusive (see sections 6.8.12, 6.8.13 and 6.8.14 of the DES procedures) it will consult with the HSE's Children and Family Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response such as a management plan or to obtain advice or to make a formal Child Protection report to TUSLA or the Gardaí (as appropriate) in accordance with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. (revised 2023)

d. Programme of Support

Bailieborough Community School's programme of support for working with students affected by bullying and for students involved in bullying behaviour consists of:

- Access to counselling services
- Access to chaplaincy services
- Access to care team services
- 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 Team.
- Regular communication between home and school by phone, e-mail, letter or face to face meetings.
- Seeking and appreciating constructive parental involvement.
- Referral to outside agencies such as Children & Family Services in HSE, BOUNCE BACK, GARDAÍ, NEPS, SESS , NCGE ... for specialised support/advice and in cases where an interdisciplinary approach is required.

Increasing awareness for bystanders when bullying behaviour occurs remains a priority area for the 2023–2024 academic year.

In particular those who join in bullying when someone else started it (assistants), the bystanders who offer positive feedback by laughing and cheering on the bully (reinforcers), the passive bystanders who stay away/remain passive and do not take sides with anyone (outsiders) and those who make efforts to help and support the victim (defenders) need our attention.

14. Supervision and Monitoring of Students

The Board of Management of Bailieborough Community School confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies & practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

15. Supervision and Monitoring of the Anti-Bullying Policy

The implementation and effectiveness of the school's existing anti-bullying policy has been analysed by the school's policy and planning focus groups. Having linked the wellbeing promotion and review process with the LAOS process and a school self-evaluation reflective questionnaire, the groups identified areas of strength and weakness. Following consultation with the transition year wellbeing group, student council & student voice members and the middle management team, further areas for improvement were highlighted.

The implementation and effectiveness of the BCS anti-bullying policy will also be discussed at middle management & tutor meetings. This will be in the context of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered and actions taken.

Personal safety will be an agenda item for all staff meetings so that concerns about the policy and/or the wellbeing of individual students can be shared and effectively addressed.

Data gathered through the reporting templates, bullying surveys and observations will be collated and analysed with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour and identifying issues requiring attention.

The principal will provide a termly report to the Board of Management setting out:

- The overall number of bullying cases reported since the previous report to the Board.
- Confirmation that all cases reported to the Board have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the DES Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

The minutes of the Board meeting will record the principal's report but will not include any identifying details of students involved.

16. Review of the Anti – Bullying Policy

The Board of Management will undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation in accordance with the procedures set out in section 7.2 of the DES Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

See Appendix F:

CHECKLIST FOR ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

The Board will ensure that an action plan is put in place to address any areas of improvement identified by the annual review.

Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parent Association.

See Appendix G:

NOTIFICATION OF POLICY REVIEW DOCUMENT.

Details of the review will be included in the Board's minutes of the meeting that adopted the review.

A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patrons and the Department.

A review of the school's anti-bullying policy was conducted at the Board of Management meeting on **Tuesday January 30th 2024.**

This policy was adopted and ratified by the Board of Management on **30/01/24**

Date of next review: **January 2025**

Signed Seamus Davidson Date 30th Jan 2024

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed [Signature] Date 30-01-2024

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Appendix F: Checklist for Annual Review of the Anti-Bullying Policy and its Implementation

The Board of Management 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 Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?	Y
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	Y
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	Y
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?	Y
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	Y
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	Y
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	Y
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	Y
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	Y
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	Y
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?	Y
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	N
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	N
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	N
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?	Y
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	Y
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	Y

Signed Seamus Sheridan

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed [Signature]

Principal

Date 30/1/2024

Date 30/01/2024

Appendix G: Notification regarding the Board of Management's Annual Review of the Anti-Bullying Policy

To: _____

The Board of Management of Bailieborough Community School wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of 30-01-2024 [date].
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix 4 of the Department's Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Signed Seamus Sheridan
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 30/1/2024

Signed M. H. H.
Principal

Date 30-01-2024