



Balla National School Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Compliance:

In accordance with the requirements of Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour Guidelines for schools issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB), (now subsumed into The Child and Family Agency -Túsla), the Board of Management of Balla 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 and Skills (DES) in September 2013.

2. Key Principles:

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) 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
- Promotes respectful relationships across the school community.

(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 pupils
- explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying
- identity-based bullying including, homophobic and transphobic bullying

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

(g) Supports for staff

(h)Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)

(i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.



3. Definition of Bullying

In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* (DES 2013) bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conduct, 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 do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this 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*.

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. Physical aggression Damage to property Name calling /Slagging The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person. Offensive graffiti Extortion Intimidation Insulting or offensive gestures The "look" Invasion of personal space A combination of any of the types listed
Cyber Bullying	Cyber bullying includes (but is not limited to) communicating via electronic means with the objective of causing hurt, fear, embarrassment, humiliation, alarm and/or distress to one or more persons.



Unlike other forms of bullying a once-off posting can constitute bullying.

While this policy addresses issues related to cyber bullying of students (i.e. situations in which one or more students are the victim[s] of bullying), the policy also applies to teachers and other school staff.

Key Measures Regarding Cyber Bullying

Staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management (BOM) will be made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying through the use of appropriate awareness-raising exercises.

Pupils will learn about cyber bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), assemblies, friendship week activities and other curriculum projects

Parents will be provided with information and advice on cyber bullying.

Infants will participate in the 'Safer Internet Day' programme

Resources adopted by our staff to help raise awareness and promote internet safety include the 'Webwise' Primary Teachers Resources

Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) will assist in learning about current technologies.

Parents will be expected to sign an Acceptable Use of ICT contract prior to enrolment and to discuss its meaning with their children.

Pupils and parents will be urged to report all incidents of cyber bullying to the school.

All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated, recorded, stored in the Principal's office and monitored regularly.

Procedures in our school Anti-Bullying Policy shall apply.

The Gardaí will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content

This policy will be reviewed annually. Pupils, parents and staff will be involved in reviewing and revising this policy and any related school procedure.

Parents and students are advised that it is illegal for a child under 13 to register with and use many social media networks, including Facebook, Instagram, and Snap Chat etc. on the school tablets, or any other device within the school, which may from



	<p>time to time be used, for such schoolwork, without a member of staff present.</p> <p>Types of Cyber Bullying</p> <p>Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation</p> <p>Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual</p> <p>Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name</p> <p>Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</p> <p>Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online</p> <p>Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</p> <p>Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</p> <p>Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety</p> <p>Silent telephone/mobile phone call Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls Abusive text messages</p> <p>Abusive email</p> <p>Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/Twitter/YouTube/Skype/Whats App/Instagram or on games consoles</p> <p>Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures</p> <p>Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</p> <p>Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation</p>
	<p>Identity Based Behaviours</p> <p>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation</p> <p>(gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).</p>
<p>Homophobic and Transgender</p>	<p>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</p>



Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background. Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include: 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	Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	Name calling Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. Mimicking a person's disability Setting others up for ridicule

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)

4. Relevant School Personnel

While all staff members (both ancillary and teaching) have a duty of care towards pupils, the key personnel involved include:

- Class teacher (or yard teacher if an incident occurs on yard): Deals with initial allegations/suspicion of bullying behaviour.
- Principal: Where bullying is suspected by the class teacher, the principal should be informed. The principal shall report to the BOM incidents of bullying behaviour
- SEN teacher: Where bullying is reported by the SET, incidents will be referred to the class teacher
- Substitute teacher: (When relevant) where bullying is suspected by a substitute teacher, incidents will be referred to the principal/other teacher.



5. Education and Prevention Strategies

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.
- As part of the Child Protection Policy the staff will be updated every second year on the procedures and where the need arises.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community, as delivered through the Stay Safe programme.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular 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-to be displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school , this can be accessed on line.
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g annual Friendship Week regular school.
- 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.: Stay Safe: Say No, Move Away, Tell. Direct approach to the teacher at an appropriate time, for example after



class. Or hand a 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.

Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.

- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. NEPs, HSE, School Counsellor, This is not an exhaustive list.
- The full implementation of the SPHE and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes in line with school policies.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme.
- 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.

Procedure for Investigating Incident of Bullying follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies:

The primary aim in investigating and 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). With this in mind the schools procedures are as follows:

- (i) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and will use restorative practice questions to help restore the relationship.
- (ii) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s). 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
- (iii) Non-teaching staff e.g. secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher
- (iv) Parents 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



- (v) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.
- (vi) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional restorative practice approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents
- (vii) Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all
- (ix) 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
- (x) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher(s) should seek answers to restorative practice questions. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example.
- (xii) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after an interview by the teacher.
- (xiii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
- (xiv) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils
- (xvi) It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
- (xviii) An additional follow-up meeting with parents of the children involved may take place after an appropriate time to ensure that the matter has been resolved satisfactorily
- (xx) Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures
- (xxi) In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

RECORDING: Noting and reporting of bullying behaviour is to be documented using the *template for recording bullying behaviour* (Appendix 2). All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

- (i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s), the relevant teacher(s) will use his/her/their



professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same

(ii) If it is established by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher(s) 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

(iii) The relevant teacher(s) must use the recording template at Appendix 2 to record the bullying behaviour which is available on the server

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.

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.

Restorative Practice

Restorative Practice underpins our anti bullying framework in Balla National School. It is a fair Process, which allows everyone to understand the rationale for their actions. This fair Process builds trust and commitment and involves three elements.

- 1) Engagement-include all pupils/adults who are involved in the bullying behaviour.
- 2) Explanation-adopt a shared understanding of the situation by all involved.
- 3) Clarity- involve all in a vision for the future.

Restorative Practice Template

Questions for pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour



Restorative Questions

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking of at the time?
3. What have you thought about it since?
4. Who has been affected and in what way?
5. How could things have been done differently?
6. What do you think needs to happen next?



Relationship to the characteristic spirit/ethos of the school:

Restorative Practices at Balla National School is based on the principle of equal respect for children, for families and for the staff of the school. We endeavour to promote a relational environment conducive to connection and belonging in line with our ethos as a Catholic school.

What is Restorative Practice: Restorative Practice is a values-based philosophy; it aims to consciously build relationships, respond to harm/conflict in a way that honours relationships, and connect us to our best selves and to one another. The values of this philosophy promote relational ways of being, it informs how we think, engage, speak, listen, and approach situations, all day, every day. There are a set of explicit observable practices that breathe life into the restorative values so that we are living values-in-action; the explicit language also facilitates and scaffolds this restorative way of being.

The intention is to develop a culture of care and respect that allows people to flourish and connect in community. Relational thinking and practices encourage high expectations to be our own best self and offer the support and care we need to reach this potential. Restorative Practice uses the restorative values as a compass; when dealing with conflict, it moves us away from blame and attack, and instead ignites a path towards connection, solutions and empathy. A restorative approach cultivates active responsibility and accountability over conformity and compliance. It also develops our capacity to regulate, recognise and communicate emotions. Emotional intelligence is the most overall success factor in careers. Ultimately it is about connection - to the self and to others.

How the Restorative Approach works:

The restorative model can be applied in a number of ways, ranging from informal work in corridors and classes to formal conferences with the wrong-doer and the harmed including working with whole classes.



Restorative Chat – informal chat using restorative questions, this does not include formal referral, preparation, contract or debrief but should/may include a follow-up.

Individual members of staff take initiative and lead the process.

Impromptu Conference – informal conference that might not include formal preparation, but should/may include a contract and a follow-up. Individual members of staff take initiative and lead the process.

Circle or Classroom Conference – formal conference that requires a formal referral, pre-conference preparation, a contract, debrief and a follow up session. Referral for support can be made to the Principal/DP for the students concerned.

Formal Restorative Meeting – these will normally take place after school and require some preparation and planning.

Formal conference or Parenting Conference – requires formal pre-conference preparation, possibly a home visit, a debrief after the conference and a follow up

Ratification and Review by Board of Management

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed _____ Signed _____

(Chairperson)

(Principal)

Date _____ Date _____

To be reviewed annually by staff & BOM (November) :



Appendix 1. Restorative Practice Questions

Restorative Practice may take many forms but all forms exist within an explicit framework of Fair Process, which allows everyone to understand the rationale for their actions. This Fair Process builds trust and commitment and involves three elements.

Engagement-include all pupils/adults who are involved in the bullying behaviour.

Explanation-adopt a shared understanding of the situation by all involved. Clarity-involve all in a vision for the future.

Restorative Practice Template

Questions for pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have been your thoughts since then?
- Who has been affected by what you did?
- In what way have they been affected?
- What do you think needs to happen next?

Questions for pupil(s) who is bullied:

- What happened?
- What were your thoughts at the time?
- What have been your thoughts since then?
- How has this affected you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen next to make things right?



Appendix 2: Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

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

Name _____ Class _____

3. Source of bullying concern/report

(tick relevant box(es))*

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

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

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*



Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

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/S EN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken:

Signed _____(Relevant Teacher) Date_____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____



Appendix 3: Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation (copy in BOM minutes)

The Board of Management undertakes an annual review of the school’s anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist is used for this purpose. 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. This will take place mid-year annually.

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?	



<p>Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?</p>	
<p>Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?</p>	