



**Boherbue Comprehensive School,
Boherbue,
Mallow,
Cork.**

Anti-Bullying Policy

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1.0 Introduction

Mission Statement:

“Boherbue Comprehensive School, conscious of its position in the community, endeavors to give the best education and service to its students and community, based on Christian values that will help all who come in contact with the school to reach their full potential”.

We are committed to this mission being fulfilled in cooperation and partnership with pupils, parents and the wider community.

The core value of our philosophy is based on care, respect, community, inclusion, equality, justice and fairness. We endeavor to assist each student to reach their potential in a calm, caring and creative environment.

In this context we believe that everyone in the School, both students and staff has a right to a safe, respectful and caring environment, which is free from threats, fear, harassment or intimidation. The purpose of this policy is to protect these rights and ensure that the school community is made aware that bullying will not be tolerated in any form.

2.0 Legal Context

The policy, therefore, is to protect all members of our school community from being bullied (students, staff including teachers and other people working in the School)

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board, the Board of Management of Boherbue Comprehensive 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.

In accordance with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 and Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements, the Board of Management of Boherbue Comprehensive School reviews the Child Safeguarding Statement on an annual basis.

The Principal reports all Child Welfare Concerns including bullying through the Child Protection

Oversight Report at each Board Meeting.

3.1 Philosophy of the Policy

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 positive School culture and climate which:
 - o is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
 - o encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment and
 - o promotes respectful relationships across the School community.
- A School wide approach based upon Looking At Our Schools 2016 - A Quality Framework : Teaching & Learning Domain J: Learner Experiences

STANDARDS	STATEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE	STATEMENTS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PRACTICE
Students grow as learners through respectful interactions and experiences that are challenging and supportive	Interactions among students and between students and teachers are respectful and positive, and conducive to well-being.	Interactions among students and between students and teachers are very respectful and positive, and conducive to well-being.
	Relationships and interactions in classrooms and learning areas support a co-operative and productive learning environment.	Relationships and interactions in classrooms and learning areas create and sustain a co-operative, affirming and productive learning environment.
	Students' experiences as learners generally reflect well on how the code of behaviour is understood and implemented.	Students' experiences as learners reflect consistently well on how the code of behaviour is understood and implemented.

Effective Leadership based upon Looking At Our Schools 2016 - A Quality Framework: Leadership & Management Domain 2: Managing the Organisation

STANDARDS	STATEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE	STATEMENTS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PRACTICE
<p>Establish an orderly, secure and healthy learning environment, and maintain it through effective communication</p>	<p>The board of management and the principal are aware of their statutory obligations, and work to ensure that all legislative and policy requirements are met.</p>	<p>The board of management and the principal are fully aware of their statutory obligations, and ensure timely compliance with all legislative and policy requirements.</p>
	<p>The board of management and the principal fulfil their responsibility to create and maintain a climate of security and well-being in the school. They are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all students and staff.</p>	<p>The board of management and the principal fulfil their responsibility to create and maintain a climate of security and well-being in the school. They develop and implement clear policies to ensure the safety and well-being of all students and staff.</p>
	<p>The board of management and the principal understand the school's responsibilities for child protection and health and safety matters and communicate these effectively. They liaise appropriately with the relevant statutory bodies.</p>	<p>The board of management and the principal fully understand the school's responsibilities for child protection and health and safety matters and communicate these very effectively to the whole school community. They work constructively with the relevant statutory bodies.</p>

- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that:
 - o build empathy, respect and resilience in students and
 - o explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying
- Effective supervision and monitoring of students
- Supports for staff
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of DES recording templates and established intervention strategies) and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

4.1 Definition

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

"Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time".

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on the person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying to those with disabilities or additional/special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents or intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the School's Code of Behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying

behaviour. Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Code of Behaviour.

4.2 Types of Bullying

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

- **Physical Aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault.
- **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.
- **Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them, loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control:
"Do this or I won't be your friend anymore" (implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person; non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumors about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".
- **Cyber-bullying:** 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, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.
- **Homophobic/ Transgender Bullying:** During adolescence, bullying often has a sexual content.

- **Name calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts insults or humiliates them should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance e.g. size, clothes worn etc. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who are perceived as high achievers who are also targeted.
- **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a student's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
- **Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted student not delivering on the demand). A student may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.
- **Bullying of School Personnel**
Bullying of school personnel by means of physical assault, damage to property, verbal abuse, threats to people' s families etc.

5.1 Links to Other Policies & Procedures

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement*
- Internet Safety - Acceptable Usage Policy
- Health & Safety Statement & Policy
- Social Personal and Health education & Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
- Whole School Guidance Plan
- Additional Educational Needs Policy
- Admissions Policy

***Child Safeguarding Statement**

The Child Safeguarding Statement outlines how the School manages all child welfare concerns including bullying.

The Child Safeguarding Statement will:

- recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
- fully comply with its statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and other relevant legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children;
- fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters;
- adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect;
- develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children; and fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

6.1 Relevant teacher(s) for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

We respond in a consistent and clear approach when dealing with bullying. A student or parent may bring a bullying concern to any member of staff in the School. In the case where a student is being bullied, she can approach the following people:

- SPHE Teacher
- Class Teacher
- Year Head
- Guidance Counsellor
- Any member of the staff with whom the student feels comfortable
- Principal or Deputy Principal

7.1 Implementation of Education and Prevention Strategies

Restorative Practice- our school community manages conflict, harm and tensions by repairing and building relationships. In dealing with a bullying incident the focus will be on the harm that has been done to people and relationships and also creates obligations, liabilities and responsibilities.

The School will work proactively to ensure as far as it can that bullying does not take place. Bullying can be prevented by raising awareness in the school community about the reality of bullying and its detrimental effects. The school uses the following approaches.

- The Anti-Bullying Policy is an integral part of our School's pastoral care system and our Code of Behaviour.
- Teachers regularly stress to students the importance of reporting matters of concern and by extension, it is considered everyone's duty to be mindful and report any behaviour that is inappropriate.
- It is made clear to all students that when they report incidents of bullying they are not telling tales but behaving responsibly and seeking the support of adult members of the school community. Moreover, we make it clear that remaining silent very often compounds the situation and can unwittingly send the wrong message to the alleged bully.
- The school seeks opportunities to enhance the self-worth of all pupils through its Religious Education, Wellbeing, SPHE and RSE curriculum and the explicit promotion of our School's Catholic ethos.
- As part of the SPHE curriculum, students are provided with opportunities to develop an understanding of what influences them. The influence of peers, often referred to as peer pressure, is especially powerful when young people are starting to feel independent. Students will be encouraged to think about ways they could resist some of the pressures.
- The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities that are open to all students.
- Students will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.

- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Teachers use aspects of the curriculum to raise awareness of the inappropriateness of bullying behaviour in a wide range of subjects.
- Students will be regularly surveyed about their class spirit and friendship groups to ensure that the policy is being implemented successfully.
- A programme of Cyber Bullying Workshops is arranged for 1st, 2nd & 3rd Year classes by a skilled speaker in the area of cyber-bullying as part of overall Pastoral Care (S.P.H.E. and R.S.E.). The themes from these workshops are explored further in SPHE classes.
- At Care Meetings, issues relating to our overall pastoral care system (including our Anti-Bullying Policy) are discussed and reviewed on a regular basis.
- Parents and pupils are regularly advised that they may use the Guidance Services in the School if they have any concerns with the understanding that they will be listened to and advised in a supportive environment. Parents are made aware of the counseling service through our Open Night, Parent-Teacher Meetings and our website.
- We have a “House System” within the school to foster school spirit and leadership within the student population.

A number of student leadership initiatives are proactively used to counter bullying behaviour. These initiatives include Awareness raising and prevention strategies through: Year Head/Guidance weekly meetings, First Year Induction Programme, frequent group assemblies, whole school assemblies, Mentoring Programme, Wellbeing Programme, Wellbeing Week and Friendship Week.

8.1 Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying-Guidelines for Staff

All interviews are conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils involved.

A written record of the incidents is kept with date, time, people and brief details. This record will be filed and stored safely with the relevant Year Head and Deputy Principal.

Should a teacher come across an incident of bullying behaviour, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Speak separately to the parties involved or allegedly involved. This may be some or all of the following; the person who appears to be bullying, the person who appears to be the victim and if possible, somebody not directly involved , but who saw what happened. The rights of all students will be respected and a fair hearing will be given to all students.
2. Students are told that if they are involved in bullying the following will happen:
 - If they are involved , the Code of Behaviour would apply as would pastoral support.
 - Furthermore their parent(s)/guardian(s) may be informed.
 - All bullying incidents are reported to the Board of Management.
 - Details of bullying reports are included in the Board of Management Child Protection Oversight Report.
 - The School recognises the importance of providing the necessary support structures to a student(s) involved in bullying in order that they can move forward.
3. The Reporting Form for Alleged Bullying Incident is completed in the incidences of all bullying allegations and reported to the Year Head and/or the relevant Deputy Principal.
4. The Year Head or the relevant Deputy Principal will make contact with the parents if they consider it necessary. This contact is recorded on the Reporting Form for Alleged Bullying Incident.
5. The teacher will assure the person who has been the victim of bullying of on-going support with the encouragement to report back any further attempts at intimidation.
6. The student who has been the victim of bullying and the alleged bully will receive pastoral and possibly guidance support during the investigation.
7. The School will fully investigate allegations of bullying and report the findings to the students and parents/guardians involved.
8. Teachers will consult with colleagues when situations arise to gather pertinent information, inform relevant personnel and engage with the Pastoral Care Team of Class Teacher, Year Head and relevant Deputy Principal.

9.1 Programme of Support for Students affected by Bullying

1. The student will be given the opportunity to meet with a member of the Guidance Department to support them in their school life following the incidents and investigation.
2. The School continues to raise awareness of bullying, e.g. in class, at assemblies, the conducting of questionnaires etc. This will be further supported by the delivery of Anti Bullying Workshops , Online Positive Behaviour e.g. Dr. Maureen Griffin etc. The topic is incorporated into the pastoral programmes delivered in the School.
3. Following any incident of bullying, the behaviour and progress of all students involved will be closely monitored by the relevant Year Head. Both teaching and non-teaching staff will be informed of any developments and will be asked to monitor and observe the students, complete the Class Observation Sheet and pass on these observations to the Year Head and/or relevant Deputy Principal.
4. Parent(s)/ Guardian(s) will be communicated with during, prior to and after the investigation is concluded. The School may seek the assistance of Parents/Guardians in resolving the matter or friendship , as appropriate.

10.0 Supervision & Monitoring of Students

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.

11.1 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 community.

Ratification by the Board of Management

The policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the School website and provided to the Parents' Council. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills if requested.

This policy and its implementations will be reviewed by the board of management annually. Written confirmation of the review will be notified to the parents' Council and available to school personnel. A record of the outcome will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills if requested .

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____(date).

Signed: _____
Catherine Fitzpatrick, Chairperson of Board of Management Date

Signed: _____
V. Leader, Principal Date

Appendix 1: Practical tips for building a positive school culture & climate.

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

1. Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
2. Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
3. Display key respect messages in classrooms and around the school. Involve pupils in the development and display arrangements of these messages.
4. Acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention and affirmation.
5. Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school - e.g. homophobic, racist, gender biased language and/or language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
6. Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
7. Explicitly teach pupils to comply with the school expectations re: online use.
8. Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Council in awareness raising around the positive and negative use of social media.
9. Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
10. Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the school building.
11. Ensure there is adequate supervision in all areas.
12. Support the establishment and work of student council.

Appendix 2: Report Form of an Alleged Bullying Incident

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(s) of persons involved	Class of persons involved

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

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

Assembly/Social Area	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Bathrooms	
Online	
Other	

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

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

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant Box)

Isolation/Exclusion		Traveller
Physical Aggression		Intimidation

Online Bullying		Verbal
Racial		Homophobic
Disability/SEN		Other (specify)

7. Brief description of bullying behaviour and its impact

7. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Reporting Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Year Head/Deputy Principal _____

Meeting Notes:

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Meeting Notes continued . . .

Follow up Action Points:	<u>Date:</u>
Year Head accepts Report Form.	
Copy provided to Deputy Principal.	
Investigation team identified. Team refer to Policy and agree procedures as per Policy.	
Parents/Guardians notified.	
Investigation commences.	
Referral to Guidance Department.	
Meeting of investigation team.	
Consideration and conclusion meeting with Principal.	
Findings reported to Parents/Guardians. Report to BOM/TUSLA.	

Appendix 4: Student Questionnaire

The information you give on this questionnaire will be treated confidentially.

Name: _____

Class: _____

1. Are you happy with the atmosphere in your class?
2. Who are your friends?
3. Are you feeling under pressure in anyway?
4. Is any student in your class having a hard time?
5. Is any student being left out or ignored?
6. Is any student spreading rumours, online messaging etc. that you are uncomfortable about?
7. Is there a group of students who are being unfair in your class?
8. Is there any group in our school who are not treating others fairly?
9. What do you think would help to prevent unfair/unkind behaviour?
10. If you think of your behaviour over this past term, are you proud of all your actions?

Appendix 5: Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

	Yes/No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	

Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying behaviour?	
Have an Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
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?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed: _____

P.Palmer, Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: _____

V. Leader Principal

Appendix 6: Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the Anti-Bullying Policy

School Headed Paper


Date

To Whom it Concerns,

The Board of Management of Boherbue Comprehensive School wishes to inform you of our annual review of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

The Board of Management completed a review of the policy, its associated practices and implementation at an Ordinary meeting of the Board of Management on 16th February 2022.

This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix 4 of the Department of Education and Skills *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed:  _____ Date: 16th February 2022
C. Fitzpatrick, Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed:  _____ Date: 16th February 2022
V. Leader, Principal