Scoil Náisiúnta an Easpaig Ó Gealbháin
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Relationships Repair and Restore Policy
(Anti-Bullying Policy)

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB (Túsla), the Board of Management of Bishop Galvin 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 current requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools,* which were published in September 2013. It has been updated, in line with the review and development of the school's code of behaviour, which is underpinned by Restorative Practice.

2. The Board of Management recognises the importance of developing positive relationships in a school community, the very serious nature of bullying, and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils. We are fully committed to following key principles of best practice:

   ➢ A positive school culture and climate which

     ● *promotes respectful relationships across the school community;*

     ● *is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;*

     ● *encourages pupils to discuss incidents of conflict in peer relationships at an early stage, in a supportive environment*

   ➢ Effective leadership

   ➢ A school community approach

   ➢ 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 pupils; and
     o explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.

   ➢ Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

   ➢ Supports for staff

   ➢ Consistent investigation and follow up of conflict in relationships and bullying behaviour (including use of restorative practice); and

➢ On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the code of behaviour, in conjunction with this relationships (restore and repair) policy.

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

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

The following types of behaviour are included in the definition:

- *Deliberate exclusion, persistent name-calling, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying, cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.*

- *Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative 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 public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as inappropriate behaviour.*

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be addressed in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour, which is underpinned by Restorative Practice.

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

3. **The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with conflict in relationships and bullying behaviour is as follows:**

- *Class Teacher*
- *Support Teacher*
- *Principal*

4. **The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:**

<u>Culture</u>

- The Catholic Ethos of the school encourages positive attitudes to inclusivity and equality. This permeates all aspects of the school day and throughout the teaching of the curriculum.
- The use of Restorative Practice to resolve conflict in peer relationships.

- Staff at all times will endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other and will model respectful behaviour at all times.
- Respect for all, the promotion of the value of diversity, the unacceptability of prejudice and stereotyping and the unacceptability of bullying behaviour will be central to all curricular areas.
- Every effort will be made, through curricular and extra-curricular programmes, to provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth and resilience.
- The use of restorative meetings will be used, with the expectation of engagement of all involved, focusing on finding and enacting solutions.
- Positive self-esteem will be fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for and celebrating success.
- Pupils will be helped to develop empathy by discussing feelings and by trying to put themselves in the place of others.

Code of Behaviour

- Restorative Practice underpins the school code of behaviour. This approach enables pupils to reflect on their behaviour, with the aim of finding solutions to restore relationships. Our overall aim is to ensure that all pupils feel happy, successful and connected in our school, so that they can learn.
- Staff will be vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of conflict within relationships with their peers, with particular regard to pupils with SEN.
- Teachers will respond sensitively and empathetically to pupils who disclose incidents of conflict and/or bullying behaviour, and **a restorative conversation will be used with all alleged incidents.**

Curriculum

- The SPHE curriculum provides opportunities for role playing when there is conflict in relationships. The curriculum will also seek to raise awareness of and an understanding of bullying and will deal explicitly with identity based bullying, to include homophobic and transphobic bullying.

- The SPHE programme will make specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.

- The *Stay Safe* Programme will be fully implemented in the school. It will be repeated as appropriate and referred to at least once a month. Parents will be encouraged to visit the *Stay Safe* website and a link is provided from the school website.

- Staff will consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language and explicitly teach what respectful language and behaviour looks like.

Communication

- The school will display key respect and restorative messages around the school.
- The school's Code of Behaviour and Relationships (Restore and Repair) policy will be discussed regularly with the pupils.
- Restorative Practice, including Relationships (Restore and Repair) policy will be regularly on the Agenda of the staff meeting.
- The Principal will report to the BOM at each meeting setting out the number of bullying cases and confirming that all cases referred to are being dealt with appropriately.
- Parents will be asked to support the school's Relationships Restore and Repair policy by encouraging positive behaviour both at home and at school, by being vigilant for signs and symptoms that their child is experiencing conflict within their relationship with others in school. If conflict is reported to the school, a restorative conversation will take place in an empathetic and a supportive manner. Parents are asked to support this approach in resolving conflict, with the intention of restoring and repairing relationships.
- A class check-in circle will take place on a regular basis, with a focus on key messages from the school Code of Behaviour. An Ubuntu Week will take place each year in conjunction with the *Stay Safe* Programme, whereby the school celebrates our culture and relationships, which is underpinned by Restorative Practice. This will include lessons on resilience and explicitly outline the procedures in the school when there is conflict, both once off and/or repeated. The anti-bullying lessons in the *Stay Safe* programme will be extended by each teacher to include identity-based bullying.

Technology

- Cyber-Bullying requires access to technology. Pupils will be supervised at all times when working with technology in the school. Pupils will not have access to their mobile phones/smartphones during the school day. They should be turned off in schoolbags. Use of smart watches for communication is not allowed.
- Pupils will get appropriate advice in relation to internet safety and all pupils will sign an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). Parents will be asked to discuss the AUP with their children and sign the AUP.
- Resources pertaining to Internet safety, as well as information relating to cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying, will be made available on the school website.

5. **The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:**

Key Principles

A consistent and clear approach to dealing with conflict in relationships and/or bullying behaviour is seen as essential to effective practice.

- **A concern may be brought to any teacher in the school by a pupil, parent, staff member.** All reports, including anonymous reports, where there is conflict in a relationship will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, using a restorative conversation.
- **The relevant teacher will normally be the class teacher.** A Support Teacher may also be deemed the relevant teacher.
- The primary aim of the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with conflict in a relationship is to resolve any issues and **to restore the relationships** of the pupils involved. Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with school procedures and to assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring the relationships of the pupils involved.
- In investigating and dealing with conflict in a relationship, the teacher will exercise his/her **professional judgement** to determine whether bullying behaviour has occurred.
- Teachers will take a **calm, empathetic, restorative approach**. Incidents will generally be best discussed outside the classroom setting to ensure privacy of all involved. All restorative conversations will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of the pupils involved. The intention will always be that the behaviour causing harm stops.

Procedure

- The teacher will meet with each individual separately. Restorative questions will be used:
✔ *What happened?*
✔ *What were you thinking at the time?*
✔ *What have you thought about since?*
✔ *Who has been affected and in what way?*
✔ *How could things have been done differently?*
✔ *What do you think needs to happen next?*

- Thereafter, a restorative meeting will be held with all involved. A written account (reflection sheet) of the incident(s) by the individuals involved may be deemed appropriate and helpful. Alternatively, a written agreement for all the individuals involved may be deemed necessary. Parents will be notified that the meeting has taken place, and pupils are encouraged to talk with their parents.

- ***When it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, the relevant teacher should then consult with the principal.*** Parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school will discuss with parents ways in which to reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school. Students' failure to immediately cease bullying behaviour may be viewed by the principal as a serious

risk to the safety of others.
- For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, Stage 4 (Formal Intervention) and/or suspension may be warranted in accordance with the school's *Code of Behaviour.*

- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to the pupil that he/she is in breach of the school's Code of Behaviour (and *Relationships-Restore and Repair* policy) and efforts will be made to repair and restore relationships.
- A check in with the relevant parties involved will be arranged separately by the relevant teacher, with a view to bringing the parties together again at a later date.

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed, the relevant teacher and the principal teacher must, as part of their professional judgement, take the following factors into account:

  - ✔ Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
  - ✔ Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
  - ✔ Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
  - ✔ Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;

- 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.
- 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

Procedures for Recording

All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. Records for investigating will be maintained by the teacher, which will assist his/her efforts to resolve and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. - See Appendix 1.

The relevant teacher must use the investigating and reporting template (Appendix 1) to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

a) in cases where he/she is investigating if bullying behaviour is taking place following conflict in relationships
b) where bullying is reported to the school by a pupil, parent or staff member.

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the reporting template must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal.

Bullying behaviour can be part of a Continuum of Behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. The school may refer cases to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate. In cases where the school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) will be sought.

In relation to bullying in schools, *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 (Children First)* and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* provide that in situations where "the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan".

Serious instances of bullying behaviour will, in accordance with the *Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, *the Designated Liaison Person* must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

6. **The schools programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:**

Restorative Practice is a way of working in our school. Support is provided for all pupils involved by facilitating reflective conversations on behaviour and impact on others. This will be done in close co-operation with the parents of the child. It may involve referral to a member of the Support Teacher team. Advice may also be sought from the NEPS psychologist and this advice will be acted on.

Support to all involved in the conflict is seen as an integral part of the process. This will be done in close co-operation with the parents of the child. It may involve referral to a member of the Support Teacher team. Advice may also be sought from the NEPS psychologist and this advice will be acted on.
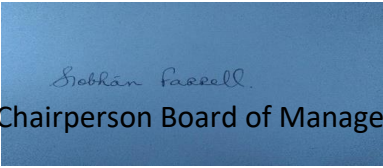
8. **Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

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

9. 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.

10. This policy was reviewed and adopt   by the Board on 13th June 2022.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. A record of the review and its outcome will be maintained and made available, if requested.

Signed: _Siobhán Farrell._   Signed: _Kathryn Gossett_
    (Chairperson Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date of policy: 13.6.22
Date of next review: June 2023

Appendix 1: BGNS Template for Investigating and Reporting Bullying Behaviour

Name of Person(s) who reported the bullying behaviour concern:_____ **Relation to person being bullied, allegedly:**_____

Name of Pupil being bullied, allegedly: _____

Class: _____

Name(s) and Class(es) of Pupils engaged in bullying behaviour:	
Name	**Class**
Location of incidents	
Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
Other	

Type of Bullying Behaviour			
Physical Aggression		**Cyber-Bullying**	
Damage to Property		**Intimidation**	
Isolation / Exclusion		**Malicious Gossip**	
Name Calling		**Other (Specify)**	

Where behaviour is identified as identity-based bullying, please indicate category				
Homophobic	**Disability/SEN**	**Racist**	**Traveller**	**Other**

Confirmation that bullying has taken place: ***Y**   **N** **If Y, record is submitted to the Principal.**

Description of Impact:

Follow-up action taken:

Signed: **Date:**