Ardrahan National School
Anti-bullying policy

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Ardrahan 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 in September 2013.

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

- A positive school culture and climate which-
    - ➢ is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
    - ➢ encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
    - ➢ promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

- Effective leadership;
- A school-wide approach;
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
    - ➢ build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
    - ➢ explicitly addresses the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

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 a person's membership of the travelling 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 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.

See Appendix 1 for examples of different types of bullying.

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:
- All class teachers in their own classes
- The Principal
- The Deputy Principal
- Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by Ardrahan National School are as follows:

School-wide approach

- 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.
- An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- School wide awareness on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- 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.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) s are advised that our policy is available to view on the school website
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g., bullying prevention; regular school assemblies by principal and/or deputy principal.
- 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.:
  - ➢ Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - ➢ Hand 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.
  - ➢ Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- 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, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.

Implementation of curricula
- The full implementation of the SPHE, the RSE, Walk Tall and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- Lessons delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.
- 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.

Links to other policies

- Code of Behaviour,
- Child Protections policy,
- Supervision of pupils,
- Acceptable Use policy,
- Attendance,
- Special Needs.

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

Investigation:
- A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school

- Teacher will exercise their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, having regard to the above-mentioned definition.
- Class teacher is to be made aware if a child in their class has reported bullying to another member of staff
- All reports of bullying must be investigated by the relevant teacher
- Non-teaching staff, such as secretaries, SNAs, bus drivers, caretakers, and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
- Parents and pupils are asked to co-operate with an 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
- Teachers are asked to take a calm, problem-solving approach in dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour
- Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of the pupils concerned
- Pupils who are not directly involved, can also make contributions, in a very useful way
- When analyzing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why.
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group where each member should be asked for his or her account of what happened, to ensure that everyone is clear about each other's statements.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from other members of the group
- It may be appropriate to ask pupils to write down their account of the incidents
- In cases where bullying behaviour has occurred, each child's parents will 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 the pupils.
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him or her, how he or she is in breach of the

school's Anti-Bullying Policy, and efforts should be made to try and get him or her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied

- It is also to make clear to all involved that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupils being disciplined, his or her parents, and the school.

Follow up and recording

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her 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;
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) s or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal - pre-determination that bullying has occurred

- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same. See Appendix 2.   The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred
- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher 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.
- These reports are to be kept in a dedicated teachers file in the office.

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)
The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- In cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal.

- All cases of bullying handed in writing to the principal, will be reported to the Board of Management at a Board of Management meeting.
- In situations where the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school with the HSE, Children and Family Social Services, with a view to drawing up an appropriate response such as a management plan.
- Where school personnel have concerns about a child, but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person will seek advice from the HSE, Children and Family Services.
- At least once in every school term, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management, setting out:
    1. the overall number of bullying cases reported since the previous report to the Board

2. confirmation of all cases referred to at 1. above have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.

- The minutes of the Board of Management meeting will record the above, but in doing so, will not include any identifying details of the pupils involved.

Established intervention strategies
- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s)s to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows
- Lessons from the SPHE programme, and other curricular areas, if it arises, i.e. the class novel, will be used to support children who have been bullied/involved in bullying behaviour to help raise their self esteem, develop their friendship and social skills wherever it is needed.
- Parents will be informed of lessons being done and asked to continue the learning at home, by discussing the issues with their child.

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.

    - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
      - Group work such as circle time

- If pupils require counselling of further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

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.

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 adopted by the Board of Management on 22/09/2022.
 This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year (using the standardized check list Appendix 4) Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, and will be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: *Martin Murphy*   Signed : *Fidelma Hughes*
(Chairperson of Board of Management)   Principal
Date: 22/09/2022   Date: 20/09/2022

Date of next review: September 2023

Appendix 1

Examples of bullying behaviours

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	• **Denigration**: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation • **Harassment**: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • **Impersonation**: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name • **Flaming**: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • **Trickery**: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • **Outing**: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • **Exclusion**: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • **Cyber stalking**: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call

	• Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology
Identity Based Behaviours **Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation** (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).	
Homophobic and Transgender	• 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
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

Practical tips for building a positive school culture and 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.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like,sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school.
- Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
- Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

Appendix 2 Template for recording bullying behaviour by relevant teacher.

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____   Class _____

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

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| |
| |
| |
| |

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

Pupil concerned	
Other pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant boxes)

Playground	
Classroom	
Dressing Rooms	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

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

| |
| |

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/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

10. Discussions with those involved

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)   Date
_____

Appendix 3 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

| |
| |
| |
| |

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

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

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

Playground	
Classroom	
Dressing Rooms	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

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

| |
| |

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/SEN 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 _____

Checklist for annual review of the Anti-Bullying Policy and its implementation completed in September 2022

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.

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*? ✓

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? No

Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?No

Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?   No

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? N/A
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement? No

Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement? No

Signed: *Martin Murphy*   Date :   22/09/2022
Chairperson   Board of Management

Signed :*Fidelma Hughes*   Date: 22/09/2022
Principal

Ardrahan National School

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

To: All Parents/Guardians

The Board of Management of Ardrahan National 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 22/09/2022
- 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: *Martin Murphy*   Date: 22/09/2022

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Signed: *Fidelma Hughes*   Date: 22/09/2022

        Principal