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Anti-Bullying Policy

BE KIND -BÍ CINÉALTA

Bí lách le gach duine

1. 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 Belgrove Senior Girls' 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 Circular 45/2013.

All members of the school community – Board of Management, all school staff, parents/guardians, pupils have a role to play in the prevention of bullying.

2. 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 others involved 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)
- 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); and
- i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. 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
- 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 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.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools Circular 35/2013*.

3a Staff to Student Incidents

Bullying by staff is defined as "a pattern of behaviour that threatens, harms, humiliates, induces fear or causes students substantial emotional distress".

In the context of allegations or suspicions of bullying by a staff member, the primary goal is to protect the students, within the school. However, school employees may be subject to malicious or false allegations. Any allegation will be dealt with sensitively and support provided for staff, including counselling when necessary. The employee will be treated fairly which includes the right not to be judged in advance of a full and fair enquiry.

Any complaints about a staff member will be directed to the principal or in the case of a complaint against the principal to the Board of Management.

Teachers are expected to adhere to the Teaching Council Guidelines (Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers, Section 3, in accordance with Section 7 (2) (b) of the Teaching Council Act, 2001) in terms of their behaviour towards students and fellow staff members.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school are: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*)

- Class/Supervising Teacher
- Principal Teacher
- Deputy Principal
- Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

All staff follow the procedures laid out in section 6.

5. Education and Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*)

- 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.
- School wide awareness measures on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community with the co-operation of the Parents' Association.
- 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 at the beginning and at relevant times during the school year and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy upon entry to the school as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school. The policy is available on the school website www.belgroveseniorgirls.ie
- The implementation of whole school awareness measures e.g. Friendship Focus, parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; class based activities, assemblies by the principal, etc.
- Encourage a culture of reporting, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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, e.g. after class.
 - Hand note up with homework.
 - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on their behalf.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Teachers may administer a confidential questionnaire at intervals to pupils.

Implementation of curricula

The implementation of the SPHE curriculum

- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying, e.g. RSE, Stay Safe, Walk Tall, Weaving Well Being, Webwise and My Life Programmes
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at senior primary level subject to Gardaí availability. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardaí, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- The school will 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/plans

- Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Internet Acceptable Use Policy, SPHE Curriculum Plan

6. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying (see Section 6.8.9 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*)

- i. The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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)
- ii. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved
- iii. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. 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. On occasion children may be asked to write a short report of their concerns
- iv. Non-teaching staff such as the secretary, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretaker, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher
- v. Parents/guardians 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
- vi. If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other’s statements. 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
- vii. Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher

- viii. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted by class teacher/principal at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). 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
- ix. Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to her how she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied
- x. 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, her parents and the school
- xi. 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. This can have a therapeutic effect;
- xii. The school will deal with all incidents of bullying within 20 days. All incidents of bullying will be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at **Appendix 3** (See Section 6.8.10 (iii))
- xiii. 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. See the school website www.belgroveseniorgirls.ie
- xiv. 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.

Established Intervention Strategies (in no particular order)

- 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 / Class Discussion
- Restorative: depending on the circumstances the two parties involved may be encouraged to solve the problem together in a restorative manner

7. Children involved in bullying will be supported in the following ways (see Section 6.8.16 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*)

- By talking about what happened
- 1 to 1 work with the child to discuss their behaviour and support them

- Contract of good behaviour
- If pupils require counselling or 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.

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 bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

9. Prevention of Harassment

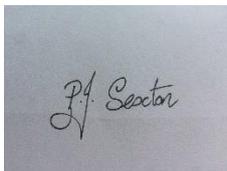
The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. Implementation and Ratification

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on **9th December 2020**

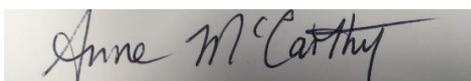
11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the patron if requested.

12. 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 of Education and Skills.



Signed: Dr. P.J. Sexton, Chairperson to Board of Management

Date: 9th December 2020



Signed: Mrs. Anne McCarthy, Príomhoide

Date: 9th December 2020

Date of next review of the whole policy: December 2022

Appendix 1 (*Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* Table A: Key elements of a positive school culture and climate)

- The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
- The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
- The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
- The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.
- The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
- The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
- The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.
- The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.
- The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
- The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

Appendix 2 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

(Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools)

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.
- 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.

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:

- Pupil concerned
- Other Pupil
- Parent
- Teacher
- Other

4. Location of incidents:

- Playground
- Classroom
- Corridor
- Toilets
- School Bus
- Other (specify): _____

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

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour:

- Physical Aggression
- Damage to Property
- Isolation/Exclusion
- Name Calling
- Cyber-bullying
- Intimidation
- Malicious Gossip
- Other (specify):: _____

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

- Homophobic
- Racist
- Other (specify): : _____
- Disability/SEN related
- Membership of Traveller community

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ Date _____
(Relevant Teacher)

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Appendix 4 Annual Review Checklist

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.

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

Signed _____

Date _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____

Date _____

Principal