Bennekerry National School Anti-Bullying Policy

A. **Rationale:** 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 Bennekerry National School has adopted the following antibullying 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.

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

(a) A positive school culture and climate which

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

(b) Effective leadership;

(c) A school-wide approach;

(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;

(e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that

- build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
- explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- Supports for staff; (Reference: Positive Staff Working Relations - Procedures from CPSMA Handbook 2012)
- 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.

C. **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.

Additional information on different types of bullying that can occur amongst pupils is set out in Section 2.2 of the Anti-Bul!ying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools and is included as <u>Appendix 1</u> to this document.

D.   The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

- The class teacher initially
- The principal thereafter, if necessary

E.   The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows: Strategies used will be at an appropriate and relevant level for each class.

- Prevention and awareness raising measures which include exercises from the "Awareness- raising" Strand of the Anti-Bullying Campaign Website. These lessons will help pupils to recognise bullying behaviour, examine the issue of bullying in a calm and rational way, make them aware of the consequences of bullying and encourage them to report bullying behaviour. All members of the School Community will be made aware of the fact that bullying behaviour is completely unacceptable in our school.
- Prevention and awareness raising measures focusing on cyber-bullying - educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online.
- Provide pupils with opportunities to enhance their self-esteem and develop a positive sense of self-worth. Encourage pupils to show empathy and respect for all members of the School Community.
- Teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner by acting as good role models.
- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum, RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- The work can be extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama, Religious Education, and Physical Education. Co-operation and group enterprise can be promoted through team sports, school clubs and societies as well as through practical subjects
- Sporting activities in particular can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression. GAA, soccer and rugby coaching is offered to some classes from outside agencies and teachers are also involved in coaching the school's Gaelic and basketball teams.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all members of staff develop 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 raising on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell:

  -Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example break time.

  -Hand note up with homework.

  -Worry box where children can pop in a note to the teacher.

  -Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.

  -Administer a confidential questionnaire once a term to pupils in all classes from 2nd to 6th

  -Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

- 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.
- The school will implement the advice in "Sexual Orientation advice for schools" (RSE Primary, see booklet).
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.

- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
- Resources / Programmes currently in use in Bennekerry N.S. —Stay Safe, RSE Resource Manuals, Weaving Well Being, Walk Tall, Talkabout, Bullyfree Zone (Song and Actions), Circle Time Activities, "Bullying in a Cyber World" (Prim-Ed, Anti-Bullying poems)
  Websites currently used by teachers in the school: anti-bullyingcampaign.je webwise.ie Cool School (HSE), www.tes.co.uk www.kidsheatth_intheclassroom, bullvfree.com, goodcharacter.com. Invisible Isabelle, anti-bullving week.org, bullyproofclassroom.com YouTube videos Mc Gruff,
- Anti-Bullying Support Materials (PDST) — a copy will be made available to all teaching staff.
  The following resources may also be considered for use: Lessons on Relational aggression (Cool School Programme: A Friend in Deed), Cyber Bullying (#UP2US, Be Safe-Be Web wise, Think Before you Click, Let's Fight it Together, The Trust pack Diversity and Interculturalism, Yellow Flag Programme. Friends For Life   programme, Stay Safe Programme and Weaving Well Being.
- Recommended websites to teach Internet Safety http://www.webwise.ie Garda Schools Programme http://www.saferinternetday.org   http://www.internetsafety.ie/   http://www.stopcyberbullying.org http://www.barnardos.ie/information-centre/voung-people/teen-help/bullving/cyberbullving.html
- Linkage to other School Policies /Practice/ Activities : Code of Behaviour, Child Protections policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance, Sporting activities.

F.   **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 (*see section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools)**

The primary reason for investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, in as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame). With this in mind, the school's procedures are as follows…..

1. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved

2. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the class teacher(s). In that way, pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to alt pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly

3. Non-teaching staff i.e. the secretary and special needs assistants (SNAs), must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher

4. Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible

5. Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents

6. Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible, but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

7. 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

8. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher(s) should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner

9. 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

10. 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.
11. Where the relevant teacher(s) has/have determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied
12. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
13. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted to inform them of the matter and to explain the actions being taken. The school will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils.
14. It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school;
15. Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if deemed appropriate.
16. An additional follow-up meeting with parents of the children involved may take place after an appropriate time to ensure that the matter has been resolved satisfactorily
17. 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 procedure
18. 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.
19. It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset

RECORDING: Noting and reporting of bullying behaviour is to be documented using the template for recording bullying behaviour (Appendix 3). All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

I. While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s), the relevant teacher(s) will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.

II. If it is established by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher(s) must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved

III. The relevant teacher(s) must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour if 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; and b) above — where the relevant teacher(s) considers that the bullying behaviour is of a very serious nature it will be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal.

IV. Incidents reported on the Recording Template will be stored in the file in the Principal's Office.

G. **The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows *(see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools)* :**
The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations. Therefore, various approaches and intervention strategies may be used, including suggesting that parents seek referrals to appropriate outside agencies in order to receive further support for the pupils and their families if needed.

H.   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.

I.   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.
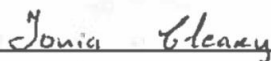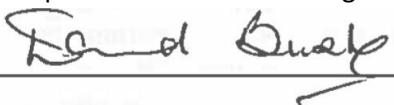

This policy was originally adopted by the Board of Management on 19th November 2014

This policy has been made available to school personnel, it is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. The Parents' Association has been provided with copies. 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. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel and be accessible to parents and pupils on request. The Parents' Association will be notified in writing that the review has taken place. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: Edmund Burke   Signed: Tonia Cleary
(Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Edmund Burke   _Tonia Cleary_

Date: 19th November 2014
Reviewed: 15th November 2017

Date of next review: November 2018

Updated with minor adjustments in Oct- 2018
Ratified by B.O.M.   _Edmund Burke 22.10.2018_

Reviewed: 22nd October 2018

Reviewed: 10th June 2019

Reviewed: 30th June 2020

Reviewed: 17th February 2021

APPENDIX 1
Types of Bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying that can occur amongst pupils.

Physical aggression: This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

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 (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours 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 (1M), 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.

Name calling: Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. 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, because they are perceived as high achievers, 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 pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be 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 hidden the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

APPENDIX 2
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
  o Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision
  o 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 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   4. Location of incidents —
   Tick relevant box(es)   Tick relevant box(es)

Pupil concerned	
Other pupil(s)	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
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. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Details of actions taken

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Signed (Relevant Teacher): _____

Date: _____

Date submitted to the Principal: _____