Ahane National School,
Laught,
Lisnagry,
Co.Limerick.

Tel: +353 (0) 61 335 101
Email: office@ahanenationalschool.ie
Roll number: 16508 C

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Anti – Bullying Policy

Table of Contents

Anti-bullying Policy at Ahane NS

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 Ahane 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.

This Policy must be read in conjunction with the Schools Overall Code of Behaviour and Existing Anti – Bullying Measures and Procedures.

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 is therefore fully committed to the following **key principles of best practice** in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

2.1 A positive school culture and climate which-

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

Key elements of a positive school culture and climate are outlined in **Table A.** Some practical tips for building a school culture and climate are also set out in Appendix 2.

3

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 it's 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.

2.2 Effective leadership

a) The BOM has overall responsibility to ensure that this policy is effective, sustainable and measured. The BOM must ensure that accountability is of the highest standard and frequently appraise the outcomes of the strategies and measures contained within the policy

b) ISM Team -(Principal, Deputy Principal and Post Of Responsibility holders)- have a clear role to act in a leadership capacity within the school community, stimulating a whole school approach to preventing and tackling bullying – and modelling best practice

c) The Principal of Ahane NS as key leader strongly influences attitudes and sets standards in relation to dealing with bullying

d) Teachers must act as good role models and not misuse authority, but be fair, clear and consistent in their disciplinary measures.

2.3 A school-wide approach;

a) A whole community approach to the problem of bullying is required and Ahane NS School community comprises of management, teachers, non-teaching staff, pupils, parents/guardians

b) Beyond the school community, bullying behaviour may extend to outside of school. Where this negatively impacts on a school - parents and pupils have a responsibility to support the school in helping to address the issue. This applies particularly (but not exclusively) to cyber bullying.

c) The assistance of Gardaí, Tusla and Community Workers may be required in some cases

2.4 A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;

a) Ahane NS endeavours to put in place appropriate systems to ensure that ALL relevant members of the school community (parents, pupils, staff and the wider community) have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour as defined in this policy *(Section 2&3 of Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools)*

2.5 Implementation of education and prevention strategies, including awareness raising measures that

a) build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
b) explicitly addresses the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and trans phobic bullying.
c) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

2.6 Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

a) Staff members have a distinct responsibility to ensure that supervision of pupils in class is effective and consistent.

b)   Supervision in playground areas must be managed and conducted effectively.

2.7 Supports for staff

a) Regular discussion and review of policy and procedures is essential to support staff on a continuous basis

b) All staff must have a uniform interpretation of what is expected in relation to bullying, how to identify possible bullying behaviours, how to manage disclosures and how to deal effectively with incidents of bullying within the classroom context

c) Staff must be aware that supporting one another is a key aspect of prevention and new/inexperienced members of staff must be given every opportunity to discuss concerns and model best practice

d) CPD in relation to Anti Bullying Strategies will be supported and encouraged for all members of staff

2.8 **Consistent recording** (Appendix 1and 3), investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and

2.9 **On-going evaluation** of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy;

3. Definition and types of Bullying

3.1 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.

3.2 The following types of bullying behaviour are included in this non exhaustive definition of bullying:
  a) deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
  b) cyber-bullying and
  c) 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 of other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

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

4. **The relevant teachers** for investigating and dealing with bullying in Ahane NS are as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):*

Principal
Deputy Principal
All class teachers.

All matters will be addressed by the Principal/Deputy Principal/relevant teachers in accordance with this policy. If class teacher cannot resolve the situation using the

7

interventions and sanctions then they progress to the level of deputy principal and principal for resolution.

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

5. 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

5.1 School-wide approach

a) A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.

b) The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

c) 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.

d) Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teachers

e) School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parents/guardians and the wider school community

f) 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.

g) Involvement of the Leadership Club in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, Lunchtime Buddies and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.

h) Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.

i) The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parents/guardians are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school on enrolment.

j) The implementation of regular (e.g. per year) whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; and parents/guardians seminars organised by Parent Association,

regular school assemblies by principal or deputy principal.

k) 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.

l) 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
- Get a parent/guardian or friend to tell on your behalf.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

m) Identify clear protocols to encourage parents/guardians to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.

n) 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.

o) The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school.

5.2 Implementation of curricula

a) The full implementation of the SPHE and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.

b) Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.

c) Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying

d) 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.

5.3 Links to other policies

Hereunder is a List of school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying:

9

a) Code of Behaviour
b) Child Protection Policy
c) Acceptable Use Policy
d) School Tours Policy
e) Swimming Policy
f) Health &Safety Policy

6   Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

6.1 The primary aim 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);

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

6.2 Reporting bullying behaviour

a) .Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.

b) . All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.

c) Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

6.3. Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach

a) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant teacher will exercise her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.

b) Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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; Parents will be involved in the initial stages of the procedures once the relevant teacher has established the facts.

c) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.

10

d) Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

e) 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.

f) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher 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.

g) 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.

h) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher.

i) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should be contacted 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) 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.

j) 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.

k) It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.

6.3 Follow up and recording

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

   a. Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
   b. Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
   c. Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
   d. Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s)s or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

6.3.2 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.

6.3.2   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.

6.4 In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

6.4 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:

6.4. 1 Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred
     a. All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. Consideration needs to be given to where the records will be made e.g. incident book. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher
     b. 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

c. The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

6.4.2 Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred

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

b. Ahane NS protocol for the storage of all anti bullying records is as follows - relevant teachers record details of situation, a copy is given to the Principal. The Principal stores copy securely. The details are also stored securely by the relevant teacher in the pupil's file and will pass on to the incoming teacher at the end/start of new year.

6.4.3 Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher must use the recording template attached to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

a) in cases where she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and

b) All confirmed instances of bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

As in formal stage 1 the recording template must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal.

Teachers' records are retained in a secure space in the teachers' classroom. All report templates given to the Principal will be retained in the filing cabinet in the Principals Office.

7. Established intervention strategies

a. Teacher interviews with all pupils
b. 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
c. Working with parent/guardian to support school interventions
d. No Blame Approach
e. Circle Time
f. Restorative interviews
g. Restorative conferencing
h. Implementing questionnaires

7.1 Ahane NS intervention strategies include

a) The traditional successful disciplinary approach
b) Mediation
c) Restorative Practice

www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/BullyingPreventionStrategiesinSchoolsKenRigby.pdf

In using the traditional disciplinary intervention strategy the sanctions may include

1) exclusion from fun time activities in class
2) in School exclusion (half day or full day)
3) sanctions outlined in Code of 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. This policy was approved by St. Senan's in 2019.This policy was reviewed as part of the Annual Review of Code of Behaviour and Anti – Bullying Policy at a Board of Management meeting on May 26th 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 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 and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: Chairperson: Tony Harnett   Date: 26th May 2020

Signed: Principal: Siobhán Kennedy   Date: 26th May 2020.

14

Code of Behaviour/Anti – Bullying Meeting 2017 – 2018

Teacher:

Date:

Time:

Agenda

Child's Name and Class

Parent in attendance

Discussion

Outcome:

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.

  - 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 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))*	
Pupil concerned		Playground	
Other pupil		Classsroom	
Parent		Corridor	
Teacher		Toilets	
Other		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 _____

*

17

Appendix 4 Checklist for the annual review of the Anti Bullying Policy and its implementation

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

Yes /No

Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the *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?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed _____   Date _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____   Date _____
Principal

18

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: _____

The Board of Management of _____ wishes to inform you that:

o   The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of _____ [date].

o   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 _____   Date _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____   Date _____
Principal