Ballsbridge College of Further Education

Coláiste Breisoideachais Droichead na Dothra

Ballsbridge College

Anti-Bullying Policy & Procedures

December 2013

Reviewed 2023

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Management Committee(NEWB), the Management Committee of **Ballsbridge College of FE** 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.

2. The Management Committee recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students 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 students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
  - promotes respectful relationships across the college 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 students; and
  - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of students;
- 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.

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 and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the college'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 college'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*.

4. The relevant persons responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying in the College are as follows:

- Deputy Principal
- Principal

PREVENTION STRATEGIES

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 college are as follows:

1. The college recognises that self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour and so will provide opportunities for students to develop a positive self-esteem;
2. The college will ensure that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex (LGBTI+) posters are displayed on college noticeboards and the college will participate in LGBTI+ awareness events;
3. The college recognises that the best way to deal with cyber-bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. The college will undertake at the start of the college year, in IT classes (e.g. WP, Internet), awareness raising measures on appropriate online behaviour and how to stay safe online. Resources from relevant websites including www.webwise.ie, https://tacklebullying.ie/ and www.internetsafety.ie will be drawn on. The college will promote a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying;
4. The college, in its strategy to prevent bullying, will take particular account of the needs of students with disabilities or Special Education Needs (SEN);
5. The college will promote and participate in the national anti-bullying awareness days/weeks each year, which can give confidence to any student being bullied;
6. The college will ensure that good supervisory and monitoring measures are in place both to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour.

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

6. *The college recognises that a clear and consistent approach is important. A student may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the college. The teacher must take action in accordance with college policy. The relevant staff members with responsibility for dealing bullying are the Principal and Deputy Principal. These are known as the "relevant staff" in this document.*

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

1. The college will draw on the resources of anti-bullying websites including www.webwise.ie, https://tacklebullying.ie/ and www.internetsafety.ie
2. The primary aim for the relevant staff 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);
3. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant staff member will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
4. All reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant staff. Non-teaching staff will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant staff;
5. Students (and parents where relevant) are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the college in resolving any issues as quickly as possible;
6. It is very important that all involved understand the above approach from the outset;
7. Teachers and other staff should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by students, staff or parents;
8. Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
9. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all students concerned. Students who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;
10. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant staff will 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;

11. 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;
12. Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the relevant staff;
13. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
14. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant staff that bullying behaviour has occurred and where relevant, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the college policy). The College will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the college and the supports for their students;
15. Where the relevant staff has determined that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the college's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the student being bullied;
16. It must also be made clear to all involved that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, his or her parents (where relevant) and the college;
17. Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the student who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect;
18. In cases where the relevant staff considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed **within 20 school days** after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant staff in the recording template at Appendix 3 (See Section 6.8.10 (iii));
19. Where a student or parent/guardian of an under 18- year old student is not satisfied that the college has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the student or parents of an under 18-year-old student must be referred, as appropriate, to the college' s complaints procedures;

20. In the event that a parent of an under 18-year-old student has exhausted the college's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the college must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
21. The College recognises that bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue. In some cases, it may escalate beyond what can be described as bullying to a serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. To ensure that any such cases are dealt with appropriately, the college's anti-bullying policy has appropriate linkages with the overall code of behaviour and provides for referral to be made to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AFFECTED BY BULLYING

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

1. Students who observe incidents of bullying will be encouraged to discuss them with teachers. The college will aim to ensure that teaching staff (including new and temporary staff) have sufficient familiarity with the college's anti-bullying policy to enable them to apply the policy when required;
2. Students who have been bullied will, if required, be given counselling and/or opportunities to participate in social activities of the college;
3. Students who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Students

The Management Committee 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 Management Committee 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 students or staff or the harassment of students 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 Management Committee on _____

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel and published on the college website. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the City of Dublin ETB if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Management Committee once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel and published on the college website. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the City of Dublin ETB and the Department.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Management Committee) (Principal)

Date: _____ Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 2: Practical tips for building a positive college culture and climate

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the college community at all times.
- Explicitly teach students what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the college
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the college. Involve students 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 college– this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of students with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to students when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the college rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach students about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage students to comply with the college rules on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with students who ignore the rules.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the college community to be safe and secure in college
- Highlight and explicitly teach college rules in student friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour
- College staff can get students to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school.

  -Hot spots tend to be in corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.

  - Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when students are moving classrooms.
- Staff should be aware that bullying behaviour can also occur in classroom settings,
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

Appendix 3: Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of student being bullied and class group

Name _____Class_____

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

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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

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

Student concerned		Classroom	
Other Student		Corridor	
Parent		Toilets	
Teacher		Library	
Other		Canteen	

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	Isolation/Exclusion
Intimidation	Malicious Gossip
Name Calling	Other (specify)

7. Where behaviour is	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Staff) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Appendix 4: Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Management Committee must undertake an annual review of the college'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 college's anti-bullying policy will be required.

	Yes /No
Has the Management Committee 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 Management Committee published the policy on the college's website	
Has the Management Committee ensured that the policy has been made available to college staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Management Committee satisfied that college 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 Management Committee ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all students?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the college 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 Management Committee satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Management Committee received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Management Committee 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 Management Committee received any complaints from parents regarding the college's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the college citing dissatisfaction with the college's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the college'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 Management Committee identified any aspects of the college's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Management Committee put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

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

To: _____

The Management Committee of _____ wishes to inform you that:

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

- 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, Management Committee

Signed _____ Date _____
Principal