

Code of Behaviour & Anti-Bullying Policy

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Code of Behaviour

1. INTRODUCTION

The Code of Behaviour details:

1. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each pupil attending the school;
2. The whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour;
3. The measures that shall be taken when a pupil fails or refuses to observe those standards;
4. The procedures to be followed before a pupil may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
5. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a pupil
6. The school's Anti-Bullying Policy; and
7. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

The Code of Behaviour for *Boher National School* has been developed in accordance with '*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*', *National Educational Welfare Board, 2008*.

2. POLICY FORMULATION

In formulating this policy the Board of Management completed the following steps;

- i. Parents and Staff were informed that an initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was available and they were invited to make submissions on the content of the code within a specified timeframe.
- ii. Class teachers were requested to discuss the topic of 'rules' with their classes and submit a list of pupils' suggestions to the Principal.
- iii. The initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was reviewed and where appropriate amended in-line with the feedback received.
- iv. The finalised draft of the policy was submitted for the Patron's Approval.

3. AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE CODE

The aims and objectives of the code are:

- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others

- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
- To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community
- To assist school staff, parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

4. WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

The Board of Management recognises the importance of creating consistent values, policies, practices and relationships that support the Code of Behaviour. Such an environment may only be formed by involving the entire school community and in this respect the Board acknowledges the importance of the roles played by the principal, teachers, ancillary staff and parents in the review and operation of the Code.

5. STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

5.1 Pupils

General Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults
- show respect for the property of, the school, other children and their own belongings
- attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual
- do his/her best both in school and for homework
- follow our Healthy Eating Policy

Classroom Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- listen – to the teacher and other pupils if they are speaking
- work – to the best of his/her ability
- value – school property and the belongings of fellow pupils.
- follow – the direction of his/her teacher
- obtain – his/her teachers permission to leave the classroom
- respect – the teacher, other pupils and visitors to the classroom.

Playground (Playing Pitches) Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- play – safely avoiding any games or play that are rough or dangerous
- follow – the directions of the playground supervisor(s)
- remain – on school grounds at all times
- obtain – permission before re-entering the school building during break periods
- respect – the yard supervisor and fellow pupils
- avoid – swearing, fighting or name calling

Behaviour in other School Areas

Each pupil is expected to:

- walk – in the school corridors and on the path to and from the sensory garden
- follow – instruction from staff members

Behaviour during School Outings/Activities

Each pupil is expected to:

- follow – his/her teacher's directions at all times
- remain – with the teacher/supervisors and group of pupils at all times
- behave – politely towards those they meet on such trips
- observe – the rules of general good behaviour

5.2 Staff

It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure the school's Code of Behaviour is administered in a manner that is consistent and fair to all pupils. However, each staff member has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within common areas of the school.

Teaching staff are specifically responsible for the management of behaviour within their own class.

They will:

- Discuss the Code of Behaviour with their class in an age appropriate manner at the beginning of the school year.
- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations.
- Ensure the rules are displayed in the classroom.
- Encourage self-discipline and positive behaviour.
- Ensure there is an appropriate level of supervision at all times.
- Promote positive behavior through example, honesty and courtesy.
- Implement the reward/sanction scheme in a fair and consistent manner.
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding the needs of others.
- Keep a written record of all incidents of continued, serious or gross misconduct. This record will indicate the advice and/or warnings given to the child on the misbehaviour and the consequences of its repetition.
- Inform pupils when instances of misbehaviour on their part are being recorded.
- Report repeated instances of serious misbehaviour to the Principal.

5.3 Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians play a crucial role in shaping attitudes in their children which produce positive Behaviour in school. Parents/guardians can assist the school by encouraging their children to abide by the school rules, encouraging punctuality and regular attendance and by ensuring that homework is given due time and effort.

Should a parent/guardian be concerned about any aspect of their child's behaviour they are welcome to make an appointment to discuss their concerns.

In cases of an identified pattern of misbehaviour parents will be invited to participate in the intervention process.

6. PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

As a general rule the school will endeavor to create an environment where positive Behaviour is reinforced through praise and reward. School staff will use encouraging language and gestures, both in class and around the school, so that positive Behaviour is instantly recognised and positively rewarded. Special attention will be paid to pupils who have previously been associated with poor Behaviour so that not only good Behaviour but also improvement in Behaviour is acknowledged.

A reward scheme for promoting positive behaviour will be used. Such rewards will include;

- A mention to a parent – written or verbal communication
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- Special privileges – Golden time, Student of the Week
- 'Bualadh Bos' in class or special mention at assembly
- A visit to another member of staff or principal for commendation
- A quiet word or gesture to show approval

7. INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

In order to establish a common understanding and consistent response the Code of Behaviour classifies misbehaviour into three levels based on the degree of disruption caused by the misconduct. The Code also specifies the disciplinary actions and supportive interventions that will be employed.

Level One

Level 1: Behaviours

Level 1 behaviours are those that interfere with the orderly learning environment of the school, classroom, and common areas. Students learn through their mistakes. To this extent, responses to the daily behaviours, which occur in school, will be developmentally appropriate, instructive and positive. Children will be taught what is expected and how they should behave. Listed below are some examples of the types of Behaviour that are included in Level 1. Please note the list is not exhaustive.

- Failure to prepare for class, as defined by individual teachers
- Running in the hallways
- Disturbing the work or play of others
- Disrespectful language, tone, or manner
- Ignoring staff requests

Level 1: Disciplinary Actions

Consequences for Level 1 behaviour are dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Teachers will discipline students at level 1. Some examples of Level 1 responses are:

- Verbal reprimand/reminder(s)
- Reinforcement of alternative positive behaviour
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others
- Prescribing additional work
- Loss of privileges
- Parent contact
- Behaviour contract

Level 1 Supportive Interventions

Listed below are some examples of Level 1 supportive actions:

- Classroom-based interventions, such as Circle Time or class meetings, with the option of informal consultation, (e.g. with parent(s)/guardian(s) or staff members)
- Discussion of behaviour with the child
- Informal notes regarding incident/intervention/date. This information would be useful should a problem persist.

Level Two

Level 2: Behaviours

Level 2 behaviours are those that seriously interfere with the orderly environment of the school and are potentially dangerous to the safety and well being of the students and staff. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 2. Please note the list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated instances of Level 1 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention
- Behaviour which is dangerous to self or others (e.g. shoving, pushing, hitting)
- Intentionally damaging school or personal property
- Stealing
- Cheating
- Use of profanity
- Derogatory reference to another person's race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability, or ethnic origin
- Disrespectful language or behaviour toward an adult
- Possession or use of dangerous toys or sporting equipment (e.g. bow and arrows, any kind of knives, etc.)
- Leaving the school without permission during the school day or leaving the care of school staff during school outings.

Level 2: Disciplinary Actions

The disciplining of students for Level 2 behaviour is dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour and developmentally appropriate levels. The disciplinary actions at Level 2 are administered by the Principal, and include the formal notification of parents, with written documentation. Some examples of Level 2 responses are:

- In school supervised detention
- Report submitted to the Board of Management
- Meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Suspension from school of one to five days, depending on the severity of the Behaviour
- Implementation of extensive behaviour management plan

Level 2: Supportive Interventions

Listed below are some examples of Level 2 supportive actions:

- Team conference to include classroom teacher, other involved staff, Assistant Principal or Principal.
- Request for assistance from external agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education.
- Referral of a Child displaying behavioral problems for psychological assessment (with the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent).

Level Three

Level 3: Behaviours

Level 3 Behaviours are considered the most serious violations. These behaviours endanger the immediate health, safety and personal well being of the pupils and staff of the school. They represent a direct threat to the orderly operation of the school environment. Situations, which include illegal activity, may result in contact with the Garda Síochána after parental involvement. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 3. Please note that the list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated or serious instances of Level 2 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention
- Setting fires
- Intentional possession or use of weapons
- Violent fighting or intentionally causing physical harm to others

Level 3: Disciplinary Actions

Behaviour at Level 3 may involve suspension from school. The length of the suspension will depend upon the severity and frequency of the specific Behaviour. Specific information about due process and procedures in respect of the issuing of a suspension is contained in this document. Level 3 responses:

- Suspension from school for one to five days:
This response will occur with the first incidence of Level 3 behaviour or Level 2 behaviour of significant severity. The Principal following due process and procedure, can issue a suspension.
- Suspension from school for five to ten days:
This response will occur with the repeated incidence of Level 3 behaviour or a severe expression of this Behaviour. A suspension of this magnitude will only be issued with the approval of the Board of Management.
- Expulsion:
Repeated incidents of Level 3 behaviour can result in a pupil being expelled.

8. PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSIONS & EXPULSIONS

8.1 Suspension

Definition of Suspension:

‘requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days’

Authority to Suspend:

The Board of Management of *Boher National School* has formally and in writing delegated the authority to impose an 'Immediate Suspension' to the Principal Teacher. An 'Immediate Suspension' may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific Behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

Furthermore, the Board of Management has formally and in writing delegated to the Principal Teacher the authority to impose an 'Automatic Suspension' for named behaviours detailed in this policy. An Automatic Suspension may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

The Board retains its authority to suspend a student in all other cases/circumstances.

Immediate Suspension and Automatic Suspension

An 'Immediate Suspension' will be deemed to be necessary where after a preliminary investigation the Principal reaches the determination that the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety and wellbeing of pupils or staff of the school. An 'Immediate Suspension' may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific Behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

An 'Automatic Suspension' is a suspension imposed for named behaviours. The Board of Management of *Boher National School*, having given due consideration to its duty of care as prescribed by Health & Safety Legislation, has determined that the following named behaviours will incur 'Automatic Suspension' as a sanction;

- Physical assault/violence resulting in bodily harm to a pupil or member of staff
or
- Physical violence resulting in serious damage to school property
or
- Leaving the school without permission during the school day.

An Automatic Suspension may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific Behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be informed of an Immediate or Automatic Suspension by telephone, and arrangements will be made with them for the pupil to be collected. In no circumstance will a student be sent home from school prior to his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) being notified. Formal written notification of the suspension will issue in due course, but no later than 2 school days after the imposition of the suspension. Such a notification will detail:

- the duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- any study programme to be followed
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s).

The Board of Management acknowledges that the decision to impose either an Immediate or Automatic Suspension does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures. In this regard, and following a formal investigation, to be completed no later than 2 school days after the incident the Board will invite the pupil and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) to a meeting to discuss;

- the circumstances surrounding the suspension,
- interventions to prevent a recurrence of such misconduct.

The Board of Management of *Boher National School* acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation process. In this regard the following undertaking is given;

- No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure.

Procedures in Respect of Other Suspensions:

In cases other than those of Immediate or Automatic Suspension the following procedures will apply;

Where a preliminary assessment of the fact confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the Board of Management of *Boher National School* will initiate a formal investigation of the matter.

The following procedures will be observed;

A written letter containing the following information will issue to Parent(s)/guardian(s);

- details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in suspension.
- An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than 5 school days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond before a decision is made or a sanction imposed.

The Board of Management of *Boher National School* acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given;

- No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process.
- The person(s) involved in the investigation process will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision-making process

Where a decision to suspend has been made the Chairperson of the Board of Management will provide written notification to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the pupil of the decision. The letter will confirm:

- the duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension

- any study programme to be followed
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s)
- the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.

Where a suspension brings the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 or the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

8.2 Expulsion

Definition of Expulsion:

'A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.'

Developing A Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board

Grounds for Expulsion:

The School may begin procedures to expel a student for repeated incidents of level 3 behaviours that have not been modified by interventions. Such behaviours include but are not limited to the following:

- Repeated or serious instances of Level 2 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention
- Setting fires
- Intentional possession or use of weapons
- Violent fighting or intentionally causing physical harm to others
- Discriminatory or prejudicial activities or actions toward another person or group involving race, gender, religion, physical condition, handicap, or ethnic origin

Authority to Expel:

The authority to expel a pupil is reserved by the Board of Management.

Procedures in Respect of Expulsion:

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion the following procedures will apply:

- a) A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal (or a Nominee of the Board if required)

As part of the investigation a written letter containing the following information will issue to parent(s)/guardian(s);

- iii. details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in expulsion.
 - iv. An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than 5 school days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond
- b) The Principal (or BoM Nominee) will make a recommendation to the Board of Management

Where the Principal (or nominee) forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal (or nominee) makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion.

In this event the Principal (or nominee) will:

- i. inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
 - ii. ensure that parent(s)/guardians have records of: the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
 - iii. provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parent(s)/guardian(s)
- c) Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's (or BOM's Nominee) Recommendations & the Holding of a Hearing

If, having considered the Principal's report, the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student a hearing will be scheduled.

The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing

- i. as to the date, location and time of the hearing
- ii. of their right to make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- iii. that they may if they so choose be accompanied at the hearing

The Board of Management undertakes that the timing of such written notification will ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

In respect of the expulsion hearing the Board gives an undertaking that;

- i. the meeting will be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures
- ii. the principal (or BoM nominee) and parent(s)/guardian(s) will present their case to the Board in each other's presence
- iii. each party will be given the opportunity to directly question the evidence of the other party

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- iv. the parent(s)/guardian(s) may make a case for a lesser sanction if they so choose

d) Board of Management Deliberations & Actions following the Hearing

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the pupil should be expelled the Board

- i. Will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing by registered post of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion.
- ii. Will not expel the student before the passage of 20 school days from the date on which the Educational Welfare Officer receives this written notification
- iii. Will in writing notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their decision and inform them that the Educational Welfare Officer is being contacted
- iv. Will be represented at the consultation to be organized by the Educational Welfare Officer
- v. Will suspend the student, if it is deemed likely that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils or staff.

e) Confirmation of the Decision to Expel

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing that the expulsion will now proceed. They will also be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 or the Education Act 1998 and will be provide with information on the submission of such an appeal.

The Board of Management of Boher National School acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given;

- i. No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process.
- ii. The person(s) involved in the investigation process will, on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision-making process.

9. NOTIFICATION OF A CHILD'S ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Parent(s)/guardian(s) should adhere to the following procedures when notifying the school of a pupil's absence;

- The school should be notified of the absence on the first day the pupil returns to school
- The reason for the absence should be notified to the class teacher
- The absence should be notified in writing by *using the school journal/ emailing the school*
- Details pertaining to the absence, such as duration and reason, should be provided
- Significant absences caused by ill health (i.e. absences longer than 10 school days) should be certified.

The school will inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more, where the child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular and when the pupil is removed from the school register

10. RECORDS

A standardised record system will be used to track an individual pupil's Behaviour. Such records will contain;

- Incidents of misbehaviour,
- interventions used to improve behaviour, including contact with parent(s)/guardian(s) or referral to other agencies
- Evidence of improved behaviour
- Any sanctions imposed, and the reasons they were imposed

Pupils will be told when a record is being made about their behaviour, and the reasons for keeping a record will be explained.

All records will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003.

11. ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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

11.1 Best Practice in the Prevention of Bullying Behaviour

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

- A positive school culture and climate which-
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity *See Appendix B*
 - includes discrete lessons on difference and diversity as part of its curriculum
 - uses materials that are representative of a wide variety of experiences namely that of LGBTQ+, people of varied ethnic and faith backgrounds including that of the traveling community and people with health issues or disabilities.
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment using strategies such as circle time
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- Effective leadership;
- A school-wide approach; This includes a school-wide 'Anti-Bullying Week' to be carried out each september.
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - explicitly 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;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies);
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

11.2 Definition of Bullying

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, DES, 2013*.

11.3 School Contact Personnel

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

It is the responsibility of the class teacher(s) of the pupils involved to investigate and follow up on incidents of bullying, from herein they will be referred to as the 'relevant teacher'. However it is the responsibility of all staff to report potential bullying incidents to the relevant teacher. In the case of serious incidents involving injury or protracted cases of bullying that have not been resolved, the relevant teacher is to formally notify the principal about the steps they have taken and with the principal review the code of behaviour in order to formulate the next step.

(see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

11.4 Education & Prevention Strategies

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:

(see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*)

Part of any Anti-Bullying Policy has to include effective education and prevention strategies. The school has a two pronged approach to education and prevention.

The first approach is to engender a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere in the school. This is done as follows:

- use of resources that reflect a diversity of experience in the school and wider community e.g. books featuring people of different ethnicities, acknowledging diversity on school notice boards.
- discrete lessons on the experiences of people of diverse backgrounds

- using calendar events to celebrate diverse experiences e.g. chinese new year, pride month
- finding opportunities to reinforce/ boost the self esteem of all pupils e.g. recognising achievement and effort at school assemblies
- Celebrating diversity and difference at school assemblies
- Use of 'Circle Time' to deal with minor conflicts in a non-judgemental manner before they evolve more problematic behaviour like bullying

The second approach is to create awareness of prevention strategies through curriculum and course work including material targeting identity based bullying (bullying based on gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnicity) and cyber bullying. Materials used are as follows:

- Stay Safe Programme which is to be carried out on a whole school basis every second year when the school year starts on an odd numbered year.
- Walk Tall Programme
- Weaving Well Being
- Web-wise
- Information and Tips for Staff' From Department of Education and Skills Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (September, 2013) See Appendix E
- Annual Anti-Bullying week each September to raise awareness of the steps pupils can follow if they feel they are being bullied

11.5 Investigation & Follow-Up Procedures

It is likely that the relevant teacher will first become aware of a bullying incident. If bullying behaviours are witnessed by other staff members, parents or students these should be reported to the relevant teacher. The relevant teacher is to follow the steps below when dealing with a bullying incident.

See Appendix G for the procedure flow chart.

Step 1: The first step in the process allows the relevant teacher to gather information about the incident. This might involve speaking with the pupil or pupils who have experienced the behaviours (without labelling them as victims of bullying), gathering information on who is involved (without labelling them as bullies), and recording any posts on the Internet, social media or mobile phones. The main task is to determine if the incident constitutes bullying as described in this policy.

Step 2: The incident has been confirmed as bullying and the relevant teacher and pupils are involved in dealing with the problem.

- From this point the relevant teacher is to keep a record of the incident and any strategies used to resolve the problem.
- The Principal is informally notified and may provide support to the relevant teacher if they feel it is needed.
- Parents of the pupils involved are informed by a phone call that there has been an incident and the steps that are being taken to resolve the problem within the class. However they are not called to meet with the relevant teacher.
- If the incident involves the Internet or social media any relevant information or posts (text or photos) must be removed.

Step 3: If the bullying continues formal contact is made with the parents of the pupils involved and the incident is formally referred to the principal

- The relevant teacher and Principal may meet with the parents separately to discuss the issue and possible solutions.
- The relevant teacher, Principal pupil(s) and parents work together to resolve the problem.
- The relevant teacher continues to keep a formal record of steps taken.

Step 4: If the bullying continues in spite of the steps taken to resolve the problem the case is brought to the attention of the Board of Management in order to explore other options, and review relevant sections of the code of behaviour.

Step 5: In all cases the relevant teacher will keep tabs of the parties involved in an incident and follow up informally with the same.

11.6 Working with Pupils Affected by Bullying

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*)

Boher National school will endeavour to minimise the impact of bullying on the lives of our pupils. The following approaches are to be used to achieve this goal.

- Pupils are to be made aware of the definition of bullying (both formally through the various school programs and informally through school communications such as assemblies)
- Pupils will learn of strategies to deal with bullying (both formally through the various school programs and informally through school communications such as assemblies)
- Use of 'Circle Time' to preempt minor conflicts evolving into more problematic behaviours
- worry box
- Anti-bullying awareness week

11.7 Supervision & Monitoring

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.

11.8 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.

11.9 Policy Adoption

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ [date].

11.10 Communication

This policy has been made available to school personnel and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

11.11 Implementation Review

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 is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request 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.

12. POLICY RATIFICATION

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of *School Name* at its meeting held on *Date*_____.

Signed: _____ Chairperson, Board of Management

Appendix A: Behaviour Contract

Behaviour Contract

Name: _____

Goals I have set

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

If I do not meet these goals, these are my consequences:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

If I do meet these goals, these are my rewards:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

My contract will be reviewed on _____.

Teacher's signature: _____

Student's signature: _____

Appendix B: Practical Tips For Building a Positive School Culture and Climate

Practical Tips for Building a Positive School Culture and Climate

(from *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*; September, 2013)

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, parents and staff 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 C: Information and Tips for Pupils-From Department of Education and Skills
Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (September, 2013)**

Information and Tips for Pupils

Remember:

- Keep unhelpful hands, feet, objects and comments to yourself.
- Know the difference between TELLING and TELLING ON.
- Play preferred games.
- Be in the right place at the right time
- Say **no** to bullies

<p>When you are being bullied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tell yourself that bullying is wrong. You do not deserve to be bullied. ● If you can, be firm and clear - look them in the eye and tell them to stop ● Try not to fight back ● Get away from the situation and tell an adult as quickly as possible ● If you can, try not to be on your own in places where bullying happens 	<p>After you have been bullied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Don't blame yourself for what has happened ● Tell a teacher or another adult in your school ● Tell your family ● If you are scared to tell a teacher or an adult on your own, ask a friend to go with you ● Keep on speaking up until someone listens ● If the bullying has happened by text message or on the Internet do not delete the message without copying it or taking a screenshot/photo of it.
<p>When you are telling an adult about being bullied be clear about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What has happened to you ● How often it has happened ● Who was involved ● Who saw what was happening ● Where it happened ● What you have done about it already ● How it started in the first place 	<p>What pupils who witness bullying can do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tell a teacher or staff member what is happening ● Do not allow someone to be deliberately left out of a group ● Do not smile or laugh in a mean way when someone is being bullied ● Encourage people who are bullied to join in with group games etc.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you can, tell the bully to stop what they are doing
--	--

Appendix D: Information and Tips for Parents-From Department of Education and Skills Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (September, 2013)

Information and Tips for Parents

General things to remember

- Be aware of the school's policy on bullying. Remember we are a telling school.
- The staff are always willing to speak with parents but remember to organise a good time to talk.
- Get more information on bullying and be comfortable with your understanding of it.
- Maintain good communication with your child, provide opportunities for one-to-one chats.
- Support any bullying awareness campaigns in the school and wider community.
- Remember, there will always be conflicts between children. However bullying is different to the normal conflicts that children have.
- Respect your child and teach them to respect others.
- Don't let your children come to school too early or hang around after school – there is only supervision during school hours.
- If you witness what appears to be a bullying incident in the school, make your concerns known to a member of staff.

What if your child is involved in bullying?

- If your child tells you they have witnessed a bullying incident, find out what happened and let the school know.
- If your child is upset over something that happened to them, try to determine whether there was genuine bullying involved. Again you can approach the teacher and get their perspective.
- Be aware of the signs and symptoms of bullying and watch for signs your child may be being bullied.
- If you are worried that your child is being bullied, ask him/her directly. Give your child a chance to vent his/her feelings about being bullied. **But remember to stay calm and listen to your child.**
- Take bullying seriously and find out the facts when told about an incident of bullying. Keep a written diary of all incidents. Don't agree to keep the bullying a secret
- Empower your child with the skills to deal with bullies. Help children practice strategies such as shouting no, walking with confidence and keeping away from bullies.
- If the bullying is happening on the way to or from school, arrange to meet your child and walk with them.
- If your child has been identified as displaying bullying behaviour, stay calm and don't panic. Try to find out the reasons why.

**Appendix E: Information and Tips for Staff -From Department of Education and Skills
Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (September, 2013)**

Information and Tips for Staff

General things to remember

- Promote a culture of respect in the school – children respecting children, children respecting staff, staff respecting children, staff respecting staff. Praise respectful behaviour.
- Tell the pupils from Day One that bullying is not tolerated in the school.
- Make sure children know the difference between bullying and normal conflict.
- Ensure that children, parents and teachers take responsibility for any bullying that goes on in the school. Everyone is expected to ensure that it does not happen.
- Promote the idea of the school as being a telling school. Explain the difference between telling about and telling on. Tell children to tell and back them up.
- Raise awareness of the school policy on bullying. Keep parents informed and involved.
- Use circle time or class based discussion to discuss bullying behaviour with the class. Role-play situations and discuss possible solutions or strategies. Be open to involving pupils in developing ideas. If they are part of the problem they can be part of the solution.
- Discuss the general discipline policy and anti-bullying policy with the class.
- Teach children to be confident. Differences should be acceptable and never a cause for bullying.

Dealing with incidents of bullying

- Be guided by the steps outlined in the KFD policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Support and encourage pupils to report bullying. Provide a discrete way for pupils to report bullying and encourage pupils who witness it to report.
- Take bullying seriously and find out the facts when told about a possible incident of bullying. Gather information, talk to the pupils involved individually. Keep a written record of dates, incidents and steps taken.
- If an incident of bullying occurs, challenge it directly and follow the steps in the bullying policy.
- Support children who are being bullied and help the bullies to change their behaviour.
- Inform parents (informally at first), ask for their suggestions and seek their support.
- If the bullying is about a particular issue (e.g. differences among pupils), you could initiate a discussion on the issue in class, but not focus on any particular child.
- Watch out for signs which may point to a child being bullied, be aware of suspicious you may have based on children's behaviour.
- If necessary break up the group dynamics by assigning places. Most bullying groups have a leader with other children being frightened of not bullying. Turn peer pressure against bullying.

Appendix F: Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

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

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

Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

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6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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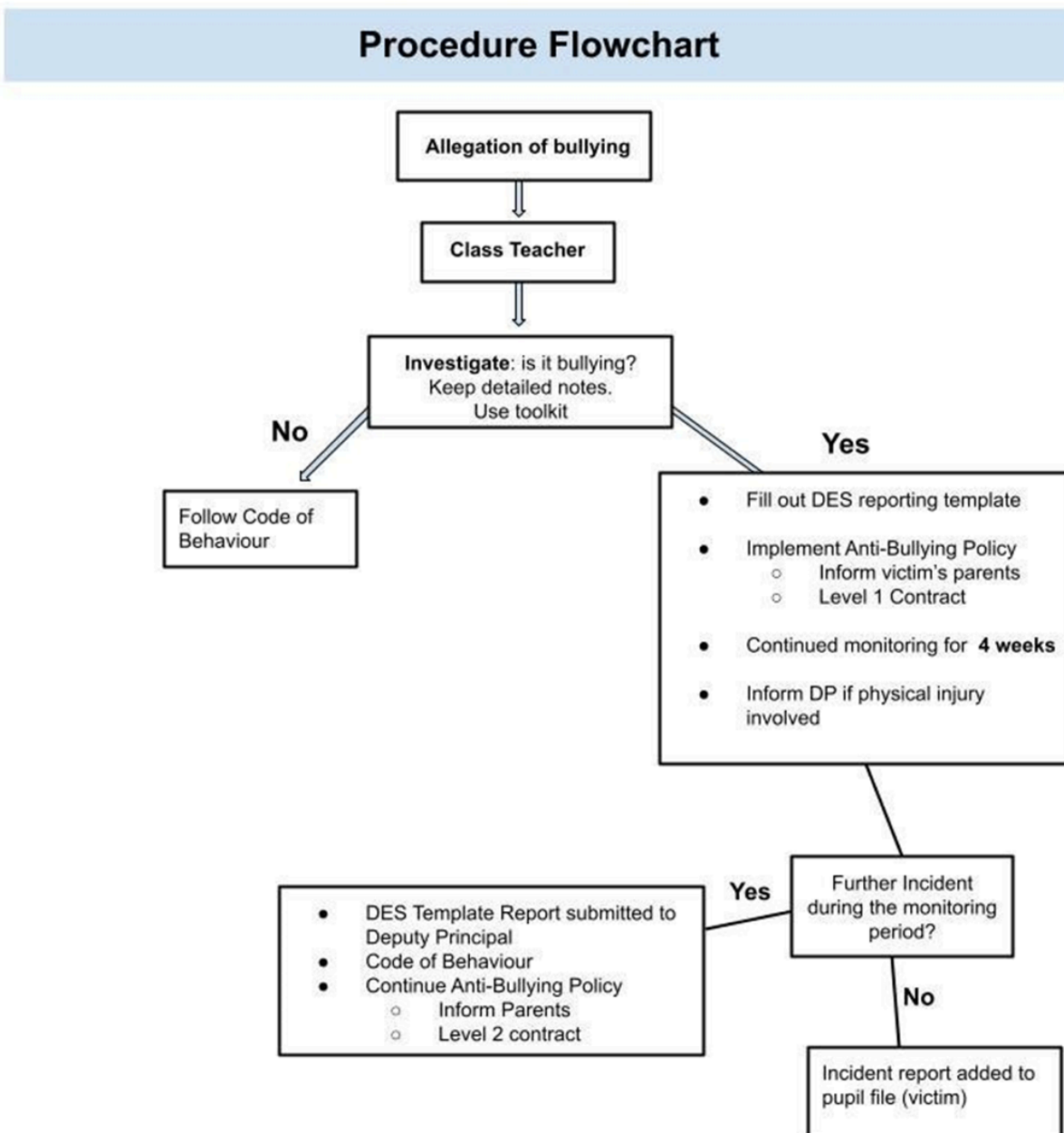
9. Details of actions taken

--

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Appendix G: Procedure to Follow in the Event of a Bullying Allegation



Bibliography of Resources

- *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools'*, National Educational Welfare Board, 2008.
- *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, DES, 2013.
- *Action Plan On Bullying Report of the Anti-Bullying Working Group to the Minister for Education and Skills DES*, 2013
- *Be safe online- Ireland's Official Online Safety Hub:*
www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/be-safe-online/
- *Cyber Bullying information:* www.webwise.ie
- *Resources for LGBTQ+ Youth Ireland:* www.belongto.org
- *National Anti-bullying and Resource Centre:* www.tacklebullying.ie
- *Online Stay Safe Programme:* www.staysafe.ie
- *Walk Tall Programme:* www.pdst.ie/walktall
- *Weaving Wellbeing Programme:* www.weavingwellbeing.com/