Balla Secondary School
Anti-bullying policy

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 Balla Secondary 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.

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:

   - A positive school culture and climate which-

      o is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
      o encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
      o promotes respectful relationships across the school 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-
      o build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
      o 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); 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 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*.

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

⇨ Year Head
⇨ Catechist
⇨ Career Guidance Counsellor
⇨ Deputy Principal
⇨ Principal

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

⇨ SPHE Resources and Programme
⇨ RSE Programme
⇨ LGBT – *Growing Up LGBT*
⇨ Extracurricular activities – sports, team sports, clubs etc. (Promote positive self-esteem)

- ⇨ Healthy Schools Programme
- ⇨ Mentor Programme
- ⇨ All subject areas can promote diversity; address prejudice and stereotyping; highlight unacceptable bullying behaviour and provide internet guidance. These subjects may include:
  - Computer and IT
  - English
  - Languages
  - Science
  - Geography
  - History
  - Art
  - All practical subjects
  - Religious Education
  - CSPE
  - PE

- ⇨ Students' internet sessions are supervised by teachers and social networking sites are blocked so students have no access to them while on the school premises. All students are educated on 'Netiquette' and the 'Be SAFE Be WEBWISE' programme is used.
- ⇨ The use of mobile phones, cameras and all electronic recording devices is in accordance with the schools code of behaviour.
- ⇨ Visual displays throughout the school of posters, poetry, slogans etc., promoting positive behaviour and tolerance of all.
- ⇨ Random surveys are carried out on students to give them the opportunity to report on bullying behaviours in a confidential and non-focussed manner.
- ⇨ Where issues of bullying type behaviour are suspected, a Class Observation Sheet is used. Subject teachers observe the behaviour of a class over a two-week period and record any incidents observed.
- ⇨ Regular reminders of The Code of Behaviour incorporating the Anti-Bullying Policy and its procedures are carried out by Year Heads.
- ⇨ Parents are informed about the Anti-Bullying policy at the 1st year information night.
- ⇨ Staff, students and parents are made aware of the policy by having it published on the school website and copies are made available in the school.

6. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

Response to Bullying: - a general outline.
- ⇨ When a student talks to a teacher about an alleged incident of bullying, a record is made of this report.
- ⇨ The student is interviewed by the teacher to whom the report is made, so that the nature of the problem can be established. The teacher should assure the student that the situation will not deteriorate as a result of their report.
- ⇨ The teacher will then report the issue to the Year Head of the particular year group. The Year Head occupies the position of relevant teacher in Balla Secondary School.
- ⇨ The Year Head should bring any issue of alleged bullying to the attention of the Deputy Principal and/or Principal.
- ⇨ The school will endeavour help the student deal with hurt feelings, develop self-esteem and coping strategies.
- ⇨ **Once the details of the bullying incident have been established, the student involved in the alleged bullying will be interviewed by their Year Head and/ or Deputy Principal/Principal**

in connection with the reported incident. They will be given the opportunity to write their own report of the incident and this will be kept on record. The Year Head will record the nature and extent of the bullying as well as who was involved in the incident.

⇨ The class teacher, Year Head or if the incident warrants it, the Deputy Principal or Principal will work with the perpetrator of the incident to help him// her to understand why his / her behaviour is viewed as bullying behaviour and unacceptable in or out of school.

⇨ Intervention Strategies: Restorative justice/Mediation/ Empowering the victim – Any or all of these strategies may be used to deal with an incident of bullying in our school.

⇨ The record of the incident will be kept on file and, depending on the seriousness of the incident, will be removed at the end of the school year.

⇨ Depending on the situation, the student who carries out the bullying and the student who is bullied may be brought together in a neutral environment with a teacher as mediator to help bring about a resolution and prevent the incident happening again. At a session such as this there is an opportunity to make an apology and give an undertaking of no further bullying behaviour. **(Intervention strategy**: **Restorative justice/mediation)**

⇨ The Year Heads will use their discretion concerning informing the parents /guardians of the student involved in the bullying behaviour; once again depending on the seriousness of the incident.

⇨ Any sanctions levied including suspension, will relate to the seriousness of the incident.

⇨ The situation will then be subject to on-going monitoring by the subject/class teacher and Year Head (relevant teacher).

7. 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*) :

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 adopted by the Board of Management on 24/10/17

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the

Parents' Association (where one exists). 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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

The Board of Management of Balla Secondary School 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 __24/10/17__ .

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: *Patricia Flatley*　　　　　　　　　　**Signed:** *Teresa Walsh*
Acting Chairperson, Board of Management　　　　　　*Principal*

Date: 24/10/17　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**Date:** 24/10/17