



## Breifne College Anti Bullying Policy 2016

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 Breifne College 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) A positive school culture and climate which

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

See Table A (6.1.5.Procedures): Key elements of a positive school culture and climate, and also Appendix 2: Practical tips for building a school culture and climate.

### (b) Effective leadership

### (c) A school-wide approach

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

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

- build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; 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;



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(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

(g) Supports for staff

(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and

(i) 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*. For example, bullying may constitute a criminal offence under **Section 10 of the Non-Fatal Offences against the Person Act 1997**.



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Section 10 of this act deals with harassment and provides that a person may be guilty of this crime if s/he:

‘... without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, by any means including by use of the telephone, harasses another by persistently following, watching, pestering, besetting or communicating with him or her.

‘For the purpose of this section, a person harasses another where-

(a) he or she, by his or her acts intentionally or recklessly, seriously interferes with the other's peace and privacy or causes alarm, distress or harm to the other, and

(b) his or her acts are such that a reasonable person would realise that the acts would seriously interfere with the other's peace and privacy or cause alarm, distress or harm to the other’.

**Section 10 harassment** is an arrestable offence and, if convicted on indictment, carries a jail term not exceeding 7 years. On conviction also, a court may make an order that the guilty party may not, for a specified period, communicate by any means, or come within a specified distance of a person's home or workplace.

**Section 2 of the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act (1989)** makes it a criminal offence for a person to publish or distribute written material, to use words, behave or display written material ... or to distribute, show or play a recording of visual images or sounds, if the written material, words, behaviour, visual images or sounds, as the case may be, are threatening, abusive or insulting and are intended or, having regard to all the circumstances, are likely to stir up hatred.

Those convicted on indictment under this provision may be sentenced to a maximum of two years imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £10,000.00.

Even where bullying does not amount to a criminal offence, the perpetrator may be held liable for damages in civil court proceedings. For example, **statements made on social media sites are covered by the provisions of the Defamation Act 2009**, which at Section 2 defines a defamatory statement as ‘one which tends to injure a person's reputation in the eyes of reasonable members of society’.

Many, young and not so young, seem to feel that by posting anonymously on social networking sites, they can guarantee that their identity is protected. This, however, is not the case. Indeed, in many cases the content of messages makes it easy to identify the perpetrator. In any case, where the Gardaí have grounds for believing that criminal activity may be occurring, applications can be made



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to the courts requiring the internet service provider or others in possession of relevant information to divulge a perpetrator's identity.

Where it is felt that bullying may amount to a criminal act, the School/College will seek legal advice and the matter will be reported to the Gardaí.

Please note that the list of examples below is non exhaustive, and Breifne College may add behaviours as it deems appropriate.

### Examples of bullying behaviours

<p><b>General behaviours which apply to all</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. The <b>1997 Non Fatal Offences against the persons Act</b> (covers all types of harassment)</li> <li>• Physical aggression</li> <li>• Damage to property</li> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Slagging</li> <li>• The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person</li> <li>• Offensive graffiti</li> <li>• Extortion</li> <li>• Intimidation</li> <li>• Insulting or offensive gestures</li> <li>• The "look"</li> <li>• Invasion of personal space</li> <li>• A combination of any of the types listed.</li>   <li>• Please note; False accusation of bullying of one member of school community against another will be regarded as a very serious example of misbehaviour under this policy.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Cyber</b></p> <p><b>See 1951 Post Office Act</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Denigration:</b> Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation</li> <li>• <b>Harassment:</b> Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual</li> <li>• <b>Impersonation:</b> Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name</li> <li>• <b>Flaming:</b> Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</li> <li>• <b>Trickery:</b> Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online</li> <li>• <b>Outing:</b> Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</li> <li>• <b>Exclusion:</b> Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</li> <li>• <b>Cyber stalking:</b> Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety</li> <li>• Silent telephone/mobile phone call</li> <li>• Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls</li> <li>• Abusive text messages</li> <li>• Abusive email</li> <li>• Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles, 'snapchat or 'Instagram'.</li> <li>• Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures</li> <li>• Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</li> </ul>
<p><b>Identity Based Behaviours</b></p> <p><b>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).</b></p>	
<p><b>Homophobic and Transgender</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation</li> <li>• Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation</li> <li>• Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner</li> <li>• Physical intimidation or attacks</li> <li>• Threats</li> </ul>
<p><b>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background</li> <li>• Exclusion on the basis of any of the above</li> </ul>



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<p><b>Relational</b></p>	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malicious gossip</li> <li>• Isolation &amp; exclusion</li> <li>• Ignoring</li> <li>• Excluding from the group</li> <li>• Taking someone’s friends away</li> <li>• “Bitching”</li> <li>• Spreading rumours</li> <li>• Breaking confidence</li> <li>• Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear</li> <li>• The “look”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sexual</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching</li> <li>• Harassment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Special Educational Needs, Disability Giftedness Exceptional High level of ability</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.</li> <li>• Mimicking a person’s disability</li> <li>• Setting others up for ridicule</li> </ul>

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying in Breifne College are as follows:

*Principal: Mr John Crotty*

*Deputy Principal: Mrs. Tara Mullan.*

*Members of the Pastoral Care structure e.g. Year Head, Tutors and members of the Care Team.*

***But please note all teachers are to act as a ‘relevant teacher’ if circumstances warrant it.***



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5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

### **School-wide approach**

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- 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.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- 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.



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- Involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be included in student journals and displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (every year).
- The implementation of regular (e.g. per year/per term/per month/per week) whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; annual or term or monthly student surveys; regular school or year group assemblies by principal, deputy principal, year heads etc.
- 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.
- **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 or to a trusted teacher in the school.**
  - **Anti-bully or Niggle box?**
  - **Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.**
  - **Administer a confidential questionnaire once a term to all pupils.**
  - **Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.**
  - **Anyone who reports bullying will be listened**
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.



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- 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.
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. GLEN [www.glen.ie](http://www.glen.ie), BeLonGTo [www.belongto.org](http://www.belongto.org)

### Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE and CSPE curricula and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Cool School Lessons, #UP2US, Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme, On My Own Two Feet.
- School wide delivery of lessons on **Relational aggression** (Cool School Programme: A Friend in Deed), **Cyber Bullying** (#UP2US, Be Safe-Be Web wise, Think Before you Click, Let's Fight it Together, Web wise Primary teachers' resources), **Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying** (Growing up LGBT, Stand Up Programme, The Trust pack) **Diversity and Interculturalism**. The school should list every resource related to the SPHE curriculum, and make a list of supports.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary and post- primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- The school will implement the advice in "Sexual Orientation advice for schools" (RSE Primary, see booklet).

### Links to other policies

- List school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying, e.g. Code of Behaviour, Child Protections policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance, Sporting activities R.S.E., Substance Use.



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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):

### **6.8.9. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying**

**\*\*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 must be consistent with the following approach.**

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

#### **Reporting bullying behaviour**

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, **must** be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

#### **Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach**

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant)teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- 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;
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible **all** incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;



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- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group if appropriate after the interview by the teacher;  
It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
- 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;
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- 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;

### **Follow up and recording**

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



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- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
- Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
- Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- 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.
- 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.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for children.

### Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

Breifne College's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

#### **Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred**

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher
- 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
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.



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### **Informal-determination that bullying has occurred**

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- The school in consultation with the relevant teacher/s should develop a protocol for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher.

### **Formal-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)**

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- a) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and
- b) Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

Breifne College should list behaviours that must be recorded and reported immediately to the principal. These should be in line with the school's code of behaviour.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. Due consideration needs to be given to where these records are kept, who has access to them, and how long they will be retained. Decisions around record keeping should be noted in this policy.

### **Established intervention strategies**

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- 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
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing



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- Implementing socio gram questionnaires
- Peer mediation where suitable training has been given

The Procedures mention the following intervention strategies and reference Ken Rigby;

[www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/BullyingPreventionStrategiesinSchools Ken Rigby.pdf](http://www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/BullyingPreventionStrategiesinSchools%20Ken%20Rigby.pdf)

- The traditional disciplinary approach
- Strengthening the victim
- Mediation
- Restorative Practice
- The Support Group Method
- The Method of Shared Concern;

7. Breifne College's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8.16 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools) :

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
  - Pastoral care system
  - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
  - Tutor/Year head system
  - Care team / Student Support Team
  - Group work such as circle time
- If pupils require counselling of further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.



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### 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.

#### **Procedures for Teachers to follow:**

Procedures for investigating, following up and recording of bullying behaviour, and intervention strategies used by the School/College for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour - see Section 6.8 of [DES Procedures](#)

- Where a member of the teaching staff has a concern about a student being bullied, either as a result of a personal observation or as a result of receiving a report from a third party, s/he may investigate and deal with the matter in accordance with the procedures set out in Section 6.8 of the [Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools](#). Alternatively, the teacher may refer the matter to the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- In investigating bullying behaviour or addressing bullying behaviour in any way, teachers are welcome to seek the assistance and support of the principal, the deputy principal or the pastoral care team at any time. Indeed, given the extent to which the principal and deputy principal are privy to all kinds of personal information about students, it would be prudent for teachers to check in with either of them before taking any action in relation to bullying behaviour.
- Where a teacher is concerned that a particular bullying episode is causing serious upset to a student, staff member or other person, s/he should bring it to the attention of either the Principal or Deputy Principal at the earliest possible opportunity.
- The School/College reserves the right to investigate allegations of bullying (and to take disciplinary action where necessary) where bullying is perpetrated by a member of the school community and it impinges on the



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work or well-being of a student in the school, even where the bullying acts are committed outside of the school/college.

- The School/College reserves the right, in accordance with Section 6.3.5 of the [DES Procedures](#) to seek the assistance of agencies such as NEPS, the HSE, and the Gardaí, where it deems such assistance is necessary to dealing effectively with bullying behaviour. In any case, where the Breifne College deems bullying behaviour to be potentially abusive (see sections 6.8.12, 6.8.13 and 6.8.14 of the [DES Procedures](#)) it will consult with the HSE's Children and Family Services to assist it in drawing up an appropriate response or to obtain advice or to make a formal child protection report to the HSE or the Gardaí (as appropriate) in accordance with the DES [Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools](#).
  
- Concerns about or allegations of bullying will be investigated and addressed in accordance with Section 6.8.9 of the [Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools](#). These are summarised as follows.
  - a. In investigating and dealing with bullying the focus will be on resolving the interpersonal issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved - rather than apportioning blame.
  - b. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
  - c. All reports of bullying, including anonymous reports, will be investigated and dealt with either by the teacher who first becomes aware of the allegations/concerns or the Principal and/or Deputy Principal. In this regard, it is incumbent on each teacher who becomes aware of bullying behaviour either to deal with such behaviour themselves or to bring such behaviour to the attention of the Principal or Deputy Principal at the earliest possible opportunity.
  - d. It will be made clear to students in all years that when they report bullying behaviour they are not considered to be 'telling tales' but are behaving responsibly and that the well-being of other students is dependent on them reporting such behaviour to a teacher or to a senior student.



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Those involved in investigating and resolving bullying behaviour will note and report developments as follows and, in doing so, they will comply with relevant data protection legislation.

- The relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement regarding the records to be kept of information received, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved with the bullying behaviour.
- Where the relevant teacher establishes that bullying has occurred, s/he must keep appropriate written records to assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- The relevant teacher must use the recording template to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
  - a) Where s/he considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after s/he has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and
  - b) Where it is necessary to report serious bullying behaviour immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal or where a relevant teacher at any time passes on concerns or allegations of bullying to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at [Annexure 1](#) must be completed **in full** and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

At any point in either investigating or resolving a bullying matter, the relevant teacher may seek the advice and support of the Principal and/or Deputy Principal while

- All non-teaching staff such as clerical and administrative, study supervisors, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners, sports' coaches, those taking extracurricular activities and those driving school buses will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to either a teacher or the principal or deputy principal.
- Incidents of bullying will be investigated in a calm, unemotional problem-solving manner.
- Incidents of bullying will generally be investigated outside of the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard for the rights of students, irrespective of whether they are allegedly involved in bullying behaviour or in a position to provide information about the behaviour being investigated.



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- Those investigating bullying behaviour will calmly seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why.
- Where a group is allegedly involved in bullying behaviour, each student will be interviewed individually in the first instance. Thereafter, where appropriate, all involved will be met as a group and, at this meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account to ensure that all are clear about what each individual is saying.
- Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that s/he may face from the other members of the group after being interviewed.
- Where deemed appropriate, those being interviewed may be asked to write down their account of what happened.
- Where the teacher investigating a bullying issue determines that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school.
- Where the relevant teacher determines that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of Breifne College's anti-bullying policy and every reasonable effort will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the student/s being bullied.
- Where the School/College deems it necessary to impose disciplinary sanctions, it will be made clear to all involved (both the bullied and those doing the bullying) and their parents) that this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, his/her parents and the School/College.
- As a follow up to a bullying issue being resolved, the relevant teacher should meet **separately** with the relevant parties to review progress. Subsequently, but only if the student who has been bullied is ready and agreeable, consideration should be given to meeting with both parties simultaneously as this can have a therapeutic effect.
- Where the relevant teacher 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, the bullying incident must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at [Annexure 1](#).
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account.
  - ⇒ Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased.



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- ⇒ Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable.
- ⇒ Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
- ⇒ Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.

Where a parent/guardian or a student who is more than 18 years old is not satisfied that the Breifne College has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, s/he will be referred to the school's complaint procedures i.e. the Code of Practice for dealing with Complaints made by Parent/s, Guardian/s of a Student or by a Student (who has reached the age of eighteen) currently enrolled in a school/centre, against a Staff Member employed by Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board (ETB) - see section 6.8.9(2013) of Anti- Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.

Where a parent/guardian or a student is more than eighteen years, having exhausted the school's complaints procedures, is still not satisfied s/he will be advised of his/her right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children –see section 6.8.9(2013) of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.



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**The following Prompt Questions may be useful in considering this aspect of the policy:**

- Are there agreed appropriate monitoring and supervision practices in the school?
- Have bullying danger spots been identified?
- Have parents and pupils been consulted in the identification of these danger spots?
- How will the student support/care structures (including year heads, class tutors, SPHE, Guidance, RE, CSPE, HSCL, Learning Support teachers) support measures to counteract bullying behaviour?
- How will pupils, in particular senior pupils, be involved as a resource to assist in counteracting bullying? In this regard, has a mentoring/buddy system been considered?
- How will the student council and school clubs be involved?
- In relation to Acceptable Use Policy in the school are the following issues addressed:
  - Are all Internet sessions supervised by a teacher?
  - Does the school regularly monitor pupils' Internet usage?
  - Have pupils been instructed to use only approved class accounts for email purposes and to use these only under teacher supervision?
  - Have pupils been instructed to access only those chat rooms, discussion forums and messaging or other electronic communication fora that have been approved by the school?

(Note that the Schools Broadband Programme has blocked all social networking sites on the basis that they waste time and take up too much of the bandwidth which is been provided for educational purposes only).



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### 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 May 30<sup>th</sup> 2014.

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.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: May 31<sup>st</sup> 2017.