



## **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 St. Mary's Boys' National School, Ferrybank 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.

THIS POLICY MUST BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SCHOOLS OVERALL CODE OF BEHAVIOUR AND EXISTING ANTI BULLYING MEASURES AND PROCEDURES.

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

### **(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.

### **At St. Mary's Boys' National School, we consider the following to be key elements of a Positive School Culture:**

- We acknowledge the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment
- We acknowledge the uniqueness of each individual and their worth as a human being
- We promote positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all our pupils
- We actively prohibit vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour by any of our pupils
- We have a clear commitment to promoting equity in general, and gender equity in particular, in all aspects of its functioning
- We have the capacity to change in response to our pupils' needs
- We identify aspects of the curriculum through which positive and sustainable influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values
- We take particular care of 'at risk' pupils and use systems to identify needs and facilitate early intervention where necessary — thus responding to the needs, fears and anxieties of individuals in a sensitive manner
- We recognise the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships within the school community

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- We recognise the right of parents to share in the task of equipping pupils with a range of life skills.
- We recognise the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying
- We promote habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities
- We promote qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among our pupils both in school and outside of school
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by ANY MEMBER of the school community

### **(b) Effective leadership**

- The BOM has overall responsibility to ensure that this policy is effective, sustainable and measured. The BOM must ensure that accountability is of the highest standard and frequently appraise the outcomes of the strategies and measures contained within the policy
- ISM Team – James Robinson (Principal), Corinna Quillinan (Deputy Principal), Aoife Grant (Assistant Principal), Noreen Tuohy (Assistant Principal), Nicola Kelly (Assistant Principal) - has a clear role to act in a leadership capacity within the school community, stimulating a whole school approach to preventing and tackling bullying — and modelling best practice
- The Principal, James Robinson, as key leader strongly influences attitudes and sets standards in relation to dealing with bullying .
- Teachers must act as good role models and not misuse authority, but be fair, clear and consistent in their disciplinary measures.

### **(c) A school-wide approach**

- A whole community approach to the problem of bullying is required and our school community comprises management, teachers, non-teaching staff, pupils, parents/guardians
- Beyond the school community, bullying behaviour may extend to outside of school. Where this negatively impacts on a school - parents and pupils have a responsibility to support the school in helping to address the issue. This applies particularly (but not exclusively) to cyber bullying.
- The assistance of Gardaí, Tusla and Community Workers may be required in some cases
- Collective vigilance is needed throughout the whole school/community sector to identify and deal with issues around bullying in a fair and equitable manner

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

- We endeavour to put in place appropriate systems to ensure that ALL relevant members of the school community (parents, pupils, staff and the wider community)

have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour as defined in this policy (Section 2 & 3 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools)

**(e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (see section 5 of this policy), 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.

**(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**

- Staff members have a distinct responsibility to ensure that supervision of pupils in class is effective and consistent
- Supervision in playground areas must be managed and conducted effectively, with particular attention given to 'hot spots' or 'hot times' e.g. arrival & dismissal
- Student Council members are consulted and engaged in a supervisory role, suitable to their capacity and understanding of the issues involved both in class and in the playground
- Ancillary staff are well placed to inform if any behaviour which may constitute bullying is noticed

**(g) Supports for Staff**

- Regular discussion and review of policy and procedures is essential to support staff on a continuous basis
- All staff must have a uniform interpretation of what is expected in relation to bullying, how to identify possible bullying behaviours, how to manage disclosures and how to deal effectively with incidents of bullying within the classroom context
- Staff must be aware that supporting one another is a key aspect of prevention and new/inexperienced members of staff must be given every opportunity to discuss concerns and model best practice
- CPD in relation to Anti Bullying Strategies will be supported and encouraged for all members of 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.

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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.

**Bullying Behaviours which St. Mary's Boys' National School has identified as relevant to our context:**

<b>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</b>	<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.</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></ul>
<b>Cyber</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ <b>Denigration:</b> Spreading rumours, 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></ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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</li> <li>○ Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures</li> <li>○ Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Identity Based Behaviours</b>	<b>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation</b> (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community)
<b>Homophobic and Transgender</b>	<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>
<b>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</b>	<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>
<b>Relational</b>	<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>➤ Spreading rumours</li> <li>➤ Breaking confidence</li> <li>➤ Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear</li> <li>➤ Use of terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching</li> <li>➤ Harassment</li> </ul>

<b>Special Educational Need, Disability</b>	<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. . Mimicking a person's disability</li><li>➤ Setting others up for ridicule</li></ul>
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4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools — section 6:7.6, 6:7.7 - are as follows:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- All Class Teachers and Special Education Teachers

5. The following education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyberbullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) will be used. (Ref: Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

**Education and prevention strategies**

**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 develop an awareness of what bullying is, the prevention and intervention strategies, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it.
- An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teachers
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parents/guardians and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be

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vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.

- Involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, Lunchtime Buddies and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support. .
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parents/guardians are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school on enrolment.
- The implementation of regular (e.g. per year) whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Anti bullying Week and parents/guardians seminars organised by P/A.; annual student surveys during Anti Bullying Week; regular class visits by principal.
- 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
- Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
- Hand note up with homework.
- Make a phone call to the school
- Anti-bullying or Worry box
- Get a parent/guardian or friend to tell on your behalf.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parents/guardians to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.
- 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.

### **Implementation of curricula**

The full implementation of the SPHE, 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.
- School wide delivery of lessons on:
  - Relational aggression -Cool School Programme: A Friend in Deed,
  - Cyber Bullying - Be Safe-Be Web wise, Think Before you Click, Let's Fight it Together, Web wise Primary teachers' resources, #UP2US,

-Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying - Growing up LGBT, Stand Up Programme, The Trust pack

-Diversity and Interculturalism, Yellow Flag Programme.

- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- Use of Friends for Life Programme with specific classes. Two staff members received training in the 2023/24 school year.
- 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.

### **Links to other policies**

Here under is a list of school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying:

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Supervision Policy
- Acceptable Use policy
- Attendance Policy
- Sporting Activities/ Extra Curricular Activities Policy
- School Tours Policy
- Swimming Policy
- SEN Policy
- Health and Safety Statement

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 8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

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, parents/guardians) 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, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher;
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as the secretary, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretaker, 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 (see section 6.8.9)

- 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 will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach;
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- 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;
- 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 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 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 will 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 will be made clear to him how he is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil(s) being bullied;
- It will 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(s) being disciplined, his 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:

- 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.

The school'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. Consideration needs to be given to where the records will be made e.g. incident book. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher.
- 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.

#### *Formal Stage 1-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 (filing cabinet in the Principal's Office).

#### *Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)*

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

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- in cases 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 {N.B.: all bullying incidents should be fully dealt with within 20 school days from the day the bullying incident was reported}; and
- All confirmed instances of bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

The recording template must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal.

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

### **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/guardian to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing
- Implementing questionnaires

The Procedures mention the following intervention strategies and reference Ken Rigby; [www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/bullyingpreventionstrategiesinschoolskenrigby.pdf](http://www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/bullyingpreventionstrategiesinschoolskenrigby.pdf)

St. Mary's Boys' National School is committed to exploring these interventions further:

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

Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that promise, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:

- He may be required to sign another promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be contacted by the 'Relevant Teacher' and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the 'Relevant Teacher' and the Principal and the pupil may be suspended from school.

- The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be expelled from the school.

**7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (Ref 6: 8: 16 of Procedures):**

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.

- SPHE Lessons - Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall
- NEPS programmes on [www.neps.ie](http://www.neps.ie)
- Anti-Bullying Week
- Buddy system
- Care Team Support inc Social Skills Group, Weaving Wellbeing
- Group work such as circle time
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. NEPS will also be contacted for advice
- 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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- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet, '
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this,
- Making adequate counselling facilities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

**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.

- There are agreed supervision and monitoring practices in the school
- Mobile phones are generally not permitted on school tours/outings except in special circumstances and must remain switched off during school.

- Bullying danger spots have been identified as the playground, front exit area, toilets, resource rooms, corridors, school tours/trips, after school activities and swimming lessons.
- Parents and pupils have been consulted in the identification of these danger spots
- Pupils will be involved as a resource to assist in counteracting bullying through the Student Council
- In relation to Acceptable Use Policy in the school the following issues are addressed:
  - o All Internet sessions are supervised by a teacher
  - o The school regularly monitors pupils' Internet usage within school time.
  - o Pupils are not permitted access to discussion forums and messaging or other electronic communication fora that have not been approved by the school.

(Note that the School's 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).

## **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 first adopted by the Board of Management at a meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2016. It was reviewed and updated on 12/02/24.

**11.** This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website 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.

**12.** This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and be 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.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, Board of Management

## **Appendix 1**

### ***Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate***

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour look 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 reward desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parent 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/schoolyard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying “hotspots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school.
  - Hot spots tend to be in the playground/schoolyard/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/schoolyard or moving classrooms

## **Appendix 2**

### ***Types of bullying***

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

o **Physical aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in ‘mess fights’, they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

o **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

o **Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person’s attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: “Do this or I won’t be your friend anymore”(implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the “silent treatment”.

o **Cyber-bullying:** This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person’s sexuality, appearance etc.

o **Name calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.

o **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil’s locker or bicycle. The

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contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

o **Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.



### Appendix 3

#### *Template for recording bullying behaviour*

**1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

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


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

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

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

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

**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		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

**8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact**

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**9. Details of actions taken**

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant Teacher) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal \_\_\_\_\_

**\* Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances

## Appendix 4

### *Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation*

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

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents’ association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal’s periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school’s handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school’s handling of a bullying situation?	

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Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Notification regarding the Board of Management’s annual review of the anti-bullying policy**

To: \_\_\_\_\_

The Board of Management of St. Mary’s Boys’ National School wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management’s annual review of the school’s anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of \_\_\_\_\_ [date].
- 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 \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

Date \_\_\_\_\_