

St. Mac Dara's Community College

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. MacDara's Community 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 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;
 - Effective leadership;
 - A school-wide approach;
 - A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
 - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that -
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
 - Supports for staff;
 - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); 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.

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

the Class Tutor

- usually, **not always**, receives the first reports of bullying and will **conduct the initial** investigate **and record** the incident(s)
- will inform the Year Head of the results of the investigation

the Year Head

- may receive the first reports and therefore may investigate but will keep the Tutor informed
- will inform the Deputy Principal/Principal

the Deputy Principal

- may be involved at the request of the Year Head or as a direct result of a request from a student or parent/guardian

the Principal

- may be involved at the request of the Year Head/Deputy Principal or as a direct result of a request from a student or parent/guardian.

All reports of bullying will be referred to the care team for their consideration. The care team consists of the Principal, the Guidance Counsellor, the Chaplain, the Special Educational Needs Coordinator and the SPHE Coordinator.

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:

- There will be a whole-school approach to education and prevention of all forms of bullying. This will require regular in-service training.
- The Social Personal Health Education programme (SPHE) adopted by St. MacDara's includes modules on bullying which include: promoting positive mental health. These aim to build the students' positive self image, self respect, respecting others and respecting difference.
- Tolerance of difference is a core value of the school. This will be reinforced by all staff, through their interactions with students and by delivery of the various programme in the school.
- The dangers of using social media and other elements of technology are outlined to students in the course of the SPHE, the IT, the Religious Education (RE) programmes amongst others.
- The RE programme also promotes the notion of respect and tolerance through it's curriculum.
- At the monthly student assemblies the Principal, Deputy Principal and the Year Head will address the topic of bullying regularly and reinforce the college's non-tolerance of bullying in any form.
- The 6th Year Prefects are instructed to monitors the students and to be alert to any behaviour that may be viewed as bullying and to inform the Year Head if they should be aware of any such behaviour.
- The Parent's Association will be encouraged to provide seminars for parents on the topic of bullying, especially the area of bullying which may take place outside the school eg. cyberbullying.
- Staff who receive relevant training will pass on summaries of their training to the remainder of the school staff.

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*) :

- Any report of bullying should be passed to the class tutor or the year head.
 - The details will be recorded using the template for this purpose and the report will be investigated.
 - A student reporting the incident(s) will be asked to write an account giving specific details eg. times, dates, events etc.
 - All parties involved in the reported bullying will be given the opportunity to give their version of the event(s).
 - Investigation into bullying must be conducted in a manner ensuring privacy, sensitivity and fairness.
 - If a group is involved, each member of the group should be interviewed individually at first. Subsequently, if deemed appropriate, they should be met as a group.
- 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*) :
- As part of the anti-bullying programme of St. MacDara's the self-esteem of all pupils is at the centre of all opportunities or activities.
 - It is the responsibility of all school staff to try to raise pupils' self-esteem in the many areas of school life. However, if a student is deemed to be at risk from bullying or is being bullied, specific members of staff must provide the support necessary for the student to allow the development of friendship and social skills. This will help develop the resilience that can be needed to deal with bullying situations.
 - These staff may include members of the Care Team, the counsellor, the chaplain, the tutor, the Year Head, the Deputy Principal and the Principal among others. The teachers delivering the SPHE programme have a particular responsibility especially in relation to the anti-bullying module.
 - The counsellor may need to work with the victims of bullying in order to raise their self-esteem and to develop coping strategies.
 - St. MacDara's holds a friendship week each year whose aim is promote friendship and positive activities which encourages students to look out for and help each other.
 - Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour will also be offered counselling and will be shown ways in which they can behave that is respectful of others while meeting their own needs.

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 _____ [date].

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: _____

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 _____