St. Louis Secondary School
Carrickmacross

Anti-Bullying Policy

2018

Anti-Bullying Policy

Section 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. Louis Secondary School Carrickmacross** 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.

Section 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

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- 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);

- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Ratified by Board of Management on: Next Review Date: May 2019

Section 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. The non-consensual sharing of sexting content always warrants a bullying report.

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*.

Section 4

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

The Year Head of the victim and the Year Head of the alleged perpetrator(s).

Section 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:

- Consultation with all partners in the school community on our approach to bullying.

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- Implementation of the Cool School Programme.
- Organizing a Friendship Week in the school every year during which anti-bullying lessons will be taught and other activities will raise awareness of bullying.
- Regular confidential questionnaire to be administered to all students once a term.
- Reminders of policy and procedures at assemblies and parent information evenings.
- Opportunities for staff training in this area.
- Informing members of the school community about the safe use of the Internet. *See Appendices 1 and 2.*
- Specific school regulations relating to the use of mobile phones, recording devices and the uploading of material to the Internet. *See Code of Behaviour, Section 5.*
- Delivery of SPHE, RSE, and TY modular programmes highlighting diversity, tolerance and inclusion.

Section 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:

For Telling

Any person who is bullied or who witnesses bullying should report it to a member of staff such as a Subject Teacher, a Class Teacher, Yearhead or a Counsellor. Reports of such incidents will be treated in a sensitive and supportive way.

This reporting could take the form of a direct approach to a teacher, by means of the questionnaire, a note handed up with homework, a phone-call to the school office, or through a third party.

For Investigating

All reports received will be investigated thoroughly and both Class Teacher and Year head will be informed at the earliest possible stage.

Interviewing the victim, bystanders and alleged bully or bullies.

The teacher who is first told about the incident will record details on the ***Investigation of Bullying Form***. Occasionally a written account of the incident may be requested from the student. At this point the student will be made aware that confidentiality may be limited and that only those who need to know will be informed.

The Year Head will take responsibility for coordinating all interviews. Interviews will be conducted in a venue that is private, and safe for all involved. Where a student is being interviewed alone by a teacher/s the student will be allowed to have another person present if they wish. All involved will be interviewed individually and a student who has reported bullying by another will not be expected to be brought together with the alleged bully without her permission.

For Resolving

It is intended that with appropriate training our school community would move towards a restorative model of conflict resolution.

A staged approach to sanctions will be taken.

A serious talk with those involved, a warning against retaliation in any form, and an agreement from the offender that this will not occur again; an apology where appropriate. These will be kept on record. Parents may be informed.

For a second offence a serious talk to make the offender aware of the sanctions. Parents will be informed by phone.

For a third offence parents will be asked to come in to the school. Detention with work to complete may be given in line with the school's code of behaviour.

For a fourth offence suspension will be considered along with the above steps. Persistent offenders may be referred for clinical psychological assessment at this stage.

In exceptional cases the above steps may be by-passed and immediate suspension given.

For Recording

Incidents will be recorded on a pre-printed ***Investigation of Bullying Form*** (See appendix 3) which will be retained on file in a secure location. In the case of graffiti photographic evidence will be taken.

If it is established by the Year Head that bullying has occurred and is continuing after 20 school days, the Year Head will record the bullying behaviour on the *Bullying Record Form.* (See appendix 4)

If it is established that the bullying behaviour is of a very serious nature then the Year Head will immediately record the case on the Bullying Record Form and supply a copy to the Deputy Principal without the lapse of time.

Bullying Record Forms will be kept for five years after all the students involved have left the school.

Section 7

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- The person investigating will keep in contact with the victim to offer support and to ensure that there is no retaliation.
- Counselling will be offered to victims of bullying.
- Bystanders will be encouraged to discuss incidents with their Year Head or Class Teacher. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

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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.

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.

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.

Once in every school term the Principal will provide the Board of Management with a report outlining the number of bullying cases recorded since the previous report and confirmation that all cases are being dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.

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: _____   Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date: _____   Date: _____

Ratified by Board of Management on: Next Review Date: May 2019

Appendix 1

Staying safe online

Advice for Parents /Guardians

Access to the internet

Students are not allowed to have unsupervised access to the internet in school. Additionally many inappropriate sites are automatically blocked. Outside of school, it is a matter for parents/guardians to determine the level of supervision required when students access the internet. Where wi-fi is available, please bear in mind that most mobiles phones can access the internet in this way.

Responsible Sharing

Explain to your daughter that once she posts something online, it will still exist somewhere out there in cyberspace even if she takes it down later. Explain to her that "posting" material online means "publishing" online and that the laws against defamation apply. If there is something your daughter wouldn't want published on the front page of a newspaper, then she should not post it online, where it could come back to haunt her later.

Cyber-bullying

This is a relatively new form of bullying which now takes place on social networking sites, by email and by text. It includes

Abusive messages or "slagging" online

Offensive comments on videos or posts

Spreading rumours online

Hacking online accounts

Posting offensive images

It's a good idea to ask your daughter if she has experienced cyber-bullying. If she has experienced abusive or offensive behaviour online she should take screenshots of the material, save and date it, and keep as evidence. She can then follow the reporting procedure on the specific social media site.

Remind her not to send messages when angry and to be careful about their wording. When we send written messages, the usual body language and verbal cues are missing. This makes it easy to misinterpret what is said.

Privacy

Parents can't always be there to monitor their daughter's internet use, so it can be helpful to go over privacy settings for social networking sites together. It's a good idea to encourage your daughter to change her privacy settings so that only her close friends can see what she posts online. Privacy settings are especially crucial when contact information and photos are posted. Young people's mobile phone numbers and postal addresses should not be shared online.

Not only do young people need to learn to protect themselves online, they also need to learn to respect the privacy of the people around them. When your daughter shares information and photos, it can also mean that photos of family members and friends are also made public.

Remember that our school's **Code of Behaviour Section 5** states that

"A mobile phone or any other device must never be used for taking either photographs or movie clips or for recording sound without the authorisation of Principal."

And

"Students must never upload recorded material of members of the school community to any Internet site without the permission of those involved."

Passwords

Passwords should be kept strictly private. Remind your daughter to always log out of websites.

Strangers

Remind your daughter that strangers she may meet online are not always who they claim to be. She should be careful with personal information she shares with strangers online.

Spam and Scams

Remind your daughter that not everything she reads on the internet is true. Also, when signing up for competitions or for subscriptions, services that may appear at first to be free of charge may in fact involve hidden fees. They may also require the disclosure of personal information.

(This appendix was updated on 09/01/2013)

Appendix 2

Staying safe online

Advice for Students

Be cyber-safe

Once information or pictures are posted on line, you have lost control of them. They can be copied, changed or manipulated by others without your permission.

The web is **NOT** a closed network of friends. Assume everything is public unless you are certain it isn't. Opting for "private" doesn't always mean that only your friends can see your profile. It may mean that anyone can see it but only your friends can post comments.

Know who can get to your personal information. Keep your password a secret. Don't even tell your best friend.

Be careful not to post personal information that might lead to you being identified by a stranger, e.g. names, pictures, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, name of sports clubs and schools. Such info can be gathered to harm you or others or to find you offline. Use a nickname instead.

Only post info you'd be happy for *anyone* to see, e.g your parents, teachers.

Remember anyone can create a user profile *pretending* to be someone else. Remember this when surfing, sharing information, chatting with "friends" or playing games.

Don't open files or emails from people you don't know.

Never meet someone you met online without your parents/guardians being with you.

Bullying can happen on line or by phone to anyone. If you are being bullied, remember it is not your fault. People do it because they think they won't be caught or because they don't understand the damage they can do to others. Always tell someone you trust such as a parent or teacher.

<u>**Cyberbullies can be traced**</u>. Online bullying is illegal and Internet providers are obliged to inform the Gardai when they receive complaints.

Don't make comments on sites which ask you to rate someone, particularly sites that relate to physical appearance or ethnic origin. Think how you might feel if it happened to you.

Treat others with respect, online and off. If you wouldn't say it face-to-face, don't say it online or by text.

Don't spread rumours about others or share their secrets, especially their contact details or passwords.

Creating videos that ridicule others is cyber-bullying and is very damaging. Don't do it.

Never reply to upsetting or frightening messages. The sender wants a reply. Don't give them that satisfaction. Keep messages as evidence, note the date they were received, and talk to an adult.

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Get an adult to report nasty stuff to the Internet Provider by writing abuse@ and then the host name, e.g. abuse@hotmail.com

Your mobile phone

Never leave your phone lying around.

Don't give your phone number to just anyone.

When you answer the phone, just say "Hello", not your name.

Use your voicemail to vet your calls. If you don't recognise the number, let it divert to voicemail.

Don't leave your full name on your voicemail greeting. Get an adult to record your greeting. Their voice may stop nuisance callers.

If you get abusive or silent phone calls, don't hang up immediately. Instead, put the phone down and walk away for a few minutes. Then turn the phone off. If the calls continue, or scare you, make a note of the time and date and tell an adult. Report such calls to the Gardai. Almost all calls can be traced. You can ask the phone company to give you a new number for free if you are being bullied or harassed.

Don't respond to nasty text messages. Save them and note the date they were received. If they upset you, tell an adult and report them.

You are responsible for your own behaviour. Be sure not to upset others or cause them to be bullied by someone else.

(This appendix was updated on 09/01/2013)

Appendix 3

Investigation of Bullying Form

Date _____   Time _____

Teacher _____ Class _____ Year _____

Names of students involved

_____

_____

_____

Details of incident

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Action Taken

_____

_____

_____

      Signed _____

Suggestions for follow-up

_____

_____

_____

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Appendix 4

Bullying Record Form

Name of pupil being bullied _____ Class _____

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

_____

_____

Source of bullying concern /report (eg. pupil, other pupil, parent, teacher, other)

_____

Location of bullying incidents _____

Name of person who reported bullying concern _____

Type of bullying behaviour (Please circle relevant word(s)

Physical aggression   Damage to property   Isolation/Exclusion

Name calling   Cyber-bullying   Intimidation   Malicious gossip

Relational bullying   Other (specify)_____

Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category: Circle the relevant word(s).

Homophobic   Disability /SEN   Racist   Traveller   Other (Specify)

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Brief description of bullying behaviour and it's impact

_____

_____

Details of actions taken

_____

_____

Year Head signature _____   **Date**_____

Principal / Deputy Principal _____   **Date** _____