

Anti-bullying Policy

Appendix 1:

All sections of this template must be completed

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behavior guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Mother of Fair Love School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behavior. 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 recognizes 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 behavior:
 - 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 identify-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 behavior (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 behavior, 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 behavior are included in the definition of bullying:

- Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying.
- Cyber-bullying
- 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 behavior.

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 behavior that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Additional information of different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

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

In both Primary & Secondary, the relevant teacher is initially the class teacher.

The Principal thereafter is contacted if necessary.

In the absence of the Principal, the Deputy Principal is the relevant person.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specially 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:

The education and prevention strategies are put in place using 5 main approaches:

- A. Development of a school wide approach.
- B. Delivery of specific programs and curriculum.
- C. Provision of reference material and training for staff.
- D. Adherence to school policies and codes.
- E. Specific targeting in the areas of cyber bullying, identity-based homophobic and transphobic bullying.

A. Development of a school wide approach

The school aims to develop empathy, respect and resilience in its students. It will aim to provide them with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self worth.

All members of the school community will be valued and respected. Students will be taught to value diversity in order to guard against stereotyping and prejudice and to inhibit bullying behavior.

School timetables will make special provision for children's safety around the area of bullying, especially at break times, when monitoring on corridors and on school grounds will be paramount. The provision of same in the areas of school tours and extra curricular activities will be especially heightened.

Ancillary school staff and non teaching staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and to report issues to relevant teachers.

An anti bullying code for the school is to included in student journals and displayed publicly around the school.

Parents/Guardians will be directed to school's anti bullying policy at the beginning of the school year. The policy will be posted on the school website and/or copies can be obtained from the school office. Teachers will discuss the code of behavior with the students in their class at the beginning of the school year.

Whole school awareness measures will be implemented throughout the year e.g. anti bullying week or annual friendship week.

The school will develop and foster a team spirit in the area of sporting events.

Anti Bullying posters are displayed throughout the school.

New students arriving in school in September and those who arrive mid year, are welcomed through the new buddy system which is run over a four week period.

The school runs a student council in order to foster, confidence, independence and tolerance.

The school will encourage a culture of telling and a particular emphasis on the importance of 'by standers' will be examined in classwork. Students will be educated to gain confidence around the area of 'telling'.

Pupils will be taught directly 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.
- Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if the witness or know that bullying is taking place.

B. Delivery of Specific Programs and Curriculum

- Mandatory Implementation of the SPHE, RSE and *Stay Safe* Programs.
- The following programs are available in hardcopy in school:
 - Zippy's Friends
 - On Line Respectful Communication
 - Up to Us
 - R U Bn Bullied Tips 4 Teens
 - Growing Up LGBT – PDF available online
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- Staff are trained/have attended seminars on the following programs:
 - Zippy's Friends (Yvonne Curran)
 - Friends Programme (Yvonne Curran, Máirín Larkin & Michael Foley)
- The following programmes will be kept as extra resources:
 - Making the Links – PDST/Department of Education
 - Walk Tall – PDST/Department of Education
 - RSE Manuals – PDST/Department of Education
 - Webwise – PDST Dept of Education
 - Busy Bodies – HSE
 - Up 2 Us – PDST/Department of Education
 - B4 You Decide – PDST/Department of Education
 - Spun Out – HSE/Rethink Ire/Department of Education
 - RSE for students with Autism Maria Field
 - Myselfie and the Wider World – PDST/Department of Education
- It is intended that the services of the local Gardai will be requested to assist in delivering training when required. Community Gardaí "Connect with Respect" workshop.
- Each year one of these programmes above will be chosen for teaching purposes:
 - 2021/2022 – Post Primary: RSE for Students with Autism Maria Field
 - Primary: RSE Manuals PDST

C. Provision of reference material and training for staff

- Professional development in the area of anti bullying will be addressed annually.
- Reference material for staff:
 - Anti-Bullying Support Material
 - Action Plan on Bullying
 - Schools for Health in Ireland
 - Bullying in Schools – Smith, Pepler & Rigby
 - Understanding School Bullying – Mona O’Moore

D. Adherence to school policies and codes

This anti bullying policy will be read in conjunction with the school’s anti cyberbullying policy, mobile phone policy, school code of behaviour and substance misuse policy.

E. Specific targeting in the areas of cyber bullying, identity-based homophobic and transphobic bullying

- Cyberbullying: we educate specifically around the areas of on line behaviour and how to stay safe on line. The school fosters a culture of reporting concerns around the area of cyber bullying.
- Homophobic and transphobic bullying: LGBT posters are displayed around the school
- Staff will, at all times, use specific statements with parents in order to clarify that the school both welcomes and respects members of the LGBT community into MFL.
- The school participates in LGBT awareness events.
- The school uses the SPHE resource *Growing Up LGBT*.
- All teacher realise that there is a space within the teaching of all subjects to foster respect in this area e.g. History, Geography, Art, Religion and PE.

6. The school’s procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behavior and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

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, will 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.
- As a special school MFL agree that it is appropriate to record using Appendix 3, any bullying behaviour which meets the threshold of bullying, report to the Principal or Deputy Principal where appropriate, having commenced recording details as soon as they consider necessary.

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 should 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 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 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:
 - 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 e.g. of incidents may include those under the headings of cyber, homophobic, ethnic background, relational, sexual and special needs.

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. Copies of the teachers own records will be stored in a locked classroom filing cabinet or the strongroom.
- 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 Stage 2-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.

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)

The school will endeavor to assist those affected by bullying by ensuring their active participation in school anti bullying programs and their teacher will monitor their progress especially in the areas of social skills and personal self esteem.

For those in need of more support the school may call on the assistance of NEPS and the HSE. Parents may also be advised to seek their own advice from outside agencies.

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 behavior 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 20th October 2021.
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 is 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
Board of Management

Signed: 
Principal

Date: 26th October 2022

Date: 26th October 2022

Appendix 2 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 looks 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 rewards to promote 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 parents 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/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school.
 - Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/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/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

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	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

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5. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es) *)

Physical Aggression	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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2. 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?	
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 _____ wishes to inform you that:

- o The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of _____ [date].
- o This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in [Appendix 4](#) of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

