

Anti-bullying Policy, Meánscoil Gharman

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 Meánscoil Gharman 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.

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

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

Class Teacher, the Principal or Deputy Principal

All relevant teachers may consult with the Principal or Deputy Principal at any stage in relation to a case (s.6.8.10 iii p.33)

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:
 - a) Fostering a school atmosphere of respect and cooperation
 - b) The school will endeavour to organise activities within the school year to foster awareness amongst students
 - c) The use of classroom opportunities to teach and demonstrate respectful behaviour
 - d) Positive encouragement and reward
 - e) Teaching of online and social media safety and appropriate behaviour
 - f) Staff awareness and supervision of students
 - g) Teaching of SPHE and RSE will include input and discussion on the dynamics and impact of bullying behaviours
 - h) Involvement of the Parents' Association
 - i) Involvement of the Student Council

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:

- a) All reports of bullying from any member of the school community (students, parents, staff or volunteers) will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. The reporting of such incidents is considered responsible behaviour. (s.6.8.9 iii p.30).
- b) The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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 apportion blame. (s.6.8.9 ip.30)
- c) In investigating alleged bullying the responsible teacher will keep an appropriate written record to assist in efforts to resolve the issues. (s.6.8.10 ii p.33)
- d) Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist in resolving any arising issues (s.6.8.9 v p.30)
- e) Interviews will be conducted with all relevant parties, including pupils who are not directly involved. Such interviews will be carried out with sensitivity and due regard to the rights of all concerned. (s.6.8.9 ix p.30) Following on from individual interviews, group meetings may be held as appropriate. (s.6.8.9 xi p.31). Written accounts of the interview may also be requested from those involved. (s.6.8.9 xiii p.31)
- f) Where it has been determined that bullying has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. Parents will have an opportunity to discuss ways they can support the action taken by the school (s.6.8.9xiv p.31)
- g) Where bullying has taken place the school's Code of Behaviour will be implemented (s.6.8.11 p.33)
- h) In cases that have not been resolved within 20 school days after the relevant teacher has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, s/he will use the Recording Form to record the bullying behaviour (Appendix 3 of DES Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools) (6.8.10 iii p. 33)
- i) In serious cases of bullying the Recording Form will be completed, and the bullying reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal. (s.6.8.10 iii p.33) The completed Recording Form will be given to the Principal and retained in a locked cabinet in the Principal's office. (s.6.8.10 iii p.33)
- j) Referral of Serious Cases
 - i. In cases where there are serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) may be sought. (6.8.11 p.33)
 - ii. In accordance with *Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011* and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, where an incident is serious and where the behaviour is potentially abusive, the school will consult with Tusla, The Child and Family Agency and may refer either to the Agency and/or Gardaí as appropriate (s.6.8.12 and s.6.8.13 p.34)
- k) Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, they will be referred to the school's complaint procedures. (s.6.8.9 xx p.32)

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

Pupils who have been bullied and those involved in bullying will be supported and provided with assistance on an ongoing basis through Pastoral Care, School Counsellor(if necessary) and participation in activities within the school. (s.6.8.15 and s.6.8.16 p.34)

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 15th May 2014.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: **Maeve Mc Cauley**
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: **Moragh Sarpur**
(Príomhoide)

Date: 15/05/2014

Date of next review: May 2015