

****Anti-Bullying Policy of Meánscoil Gharman Secondary School****

****Wexford****

****THIS POLICY IS PREPARED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GUIDELINES FROM THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL WELFARE BOARD AS SET OUT IN THE EDUCATION ACT 2000, SECTION 2****

****Anti-Bullying Policy, Meánscoil Gharman Secondary School****

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the guidelines regarding the code of behaviour issued by the National Educational Welfare Board, the following anti-bullying policy has been adopted by the Management Board of Meánscoil Gharman as part of the school's full code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the National Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools published in September 2013.

2. The Board of Management acknowledges the seriousness of bullying behaviour and the potential impact it can have on students, and the school commits to adhering to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying:

- A positive school culture where:
 - Difference and diversity are valued and inclusion is promoted.
 - Students are encouraged to report bullying behaviour and discuss it in a non-threatening environment.
 - Relationships based on respect are promoted throughout the school community.
 - Effective leadership is provided.

- A whole-school approach is adopted.
- A shared understanding of what constitutes bullying and the potential impact of bullying is developed.
- Educational and preventative strategies (including raising awareness) are implemented, which:
 - Foster empathy, respect, and resilience in students.
 - Specifically address cyberbullying and bullying related to identity, including homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of students are in place.
- Support is provided for staff.
- Bullying incidents are recorded and investigated consistently, with follow-up actions (including using recognized intervention strategies).
- Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. In accordance with the National Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is understood as negative, intentional behaviour, either verbal, psychological, or physical, which is carried out by an individual or group against another individual or group, and is repeated over time.

The following behaviours are considered bullying:

- Excluding someone on purpose, engaging in malicious gossip or other forms of bullying relationships between individuals.
- Cyberbullying.
- Bullying based on identity, such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on membership in the Traveller community, or bullying of individuals with disabilities or special educational needs.
- This list is not exhaustive.

The definition of bullying does not include isolated incidents or one-off negative behaviour, such as a single text message or other private communication that may be hurtful or insulting. These should be dealt with according to the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, a single malicious message, image, or statement posted on a public website or forum (which may be repeated by others) is considered bullying.

Negative behaviour that does not meet the definition of bullying will be dealt with according to the school's code of behaviour.

Further details on the types of bullying can be found in Section 2 of the National Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

4. Examples of bullying behaviours include:

****General Bullying Behaviour: ****

- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in equality legislation, e.g., sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying, etc.
- Physical violence.
- Damage to property.
- Name-calling.

- Taunting.
- Posting, displaying, or spreading material that is intended to intimidate or hurt another person.
- Malicious graffiti.
- Extortion.
- Intimidation.
- Humiliating or obscene gestures.
- Intrusion into personal space.
- Combinations of the above.

****Cyberbullying: ****

- Harassment: Spreading rumours, lies, or offensive content with the intent to damage another's reputation.
- Bullying: Sending harmful or abusive text messages or emails.
- Impersonation: Posting defamatory or offensive content under someone else's name.
- Provocation: Using inflammatory or provocative language to incite online fights.
- Deception: Luring someone to share personal information which is then used against them online.
- Spreading confidential information or images.
- Exclusion: Deliberately isolating someone from an online group.
- Cyber-stalking: Persistent harassment through electronic means that causes fear for safety.
- Malicious phone calls or text messages.

****Identity-based Bullying: ****

- Including any form of discrimination related to the nine grounds listed in the Equality Legislation.
- Gender, including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, or membership of the Traveller community.

****Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying: ****

- Spreading rumours about someone's sexual orientation.
- Making derogatory comments about someone with a different sexual orientation.
- Calling someone derogatory names based on their sexual orientation.
- Physical bullying or assault.
- Threatening behaviour.

****Racial, Nationality, Ethnic, and Traveller Bullying: ****

- Discrimination, prejudice, or abusive remarks regarding race, nationality, culture, social class, religion, ethnic background, or membership in the Traveller community.
- Exclusion based on any of the above.

****Relational Aggression: ****

- Behaviours that manipulate relationships as a form of bullying, such as:
 - Malicious gossip.
 - Exclusion or isolation.
 - Ignoring or neglecting.
 - Spreading rumours or secrets.
 - Peer rejection.

****Sexual Bullying: ****

- Inappropriate or unsolicited sexual comments or behaviour.
- Harassment of a sexual nature.

****Bullying of Students with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities: ****

- Name-calling or bullying based on a student's disability or special educational needs.
- Taking advantage of a student's vulnerability to target them for bullying.

****Bullying Involving Electronic Devices: ****

- Silent or abusive phone calls.
- Sending harmful text messages or emails.
- Posting offensive or defamatory material on social media or websites.

5. **Teachers Responsible for Investigating Bullying Incidents: **

- The relevant teachers in the school will be responsible for investigating bullying incidents and dealing with them (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools).
- Relevant teachers may include the Principal, Deputy Principal, and class teachers. Any teacher involved with a bullying case can consult with the principal or deputy principal at any time.

6. **Educational and Preventative Strategies:**

The school will provide education on bullying in the following ways:

- Creating a positive atmosphere of respect and cooperation in the school.
- Emphasizing respectful behaviour in the classroom.
- Implementing a rewards system to promote positive behaviour.
- Delivering SPHE (Social, Personal, and Health Education), CSPE (Civic, Social, and Political Education), and RSE (Relationship and Sexuality Education) programs.
- Conducting anti-bullying awareness programs and events, including Bullying Prevention Week.
- Regular surveys and check-ins to assess bullying behaviours.
- Teaching students how to use social media responsibly and safely.
- Promoting positive community behaviour through the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Involving the student council in creating a safe school environment.

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure its effectiveness and to promote a safe and inclusive environment for all students.

Supervision and Monitoring:

- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, hallways, school yard, school trips, and extracurricular activities. Guidance will be provided to non-teaching staff and other members of the school to remain vigilant and report incidents to the relevant teachers. There will also be supervision of students' use of communication technology at school.
- Ensure that students know who they should report incidents to and how to do it, e.g.:
 - Go directly to the teacher at an appropriate time, such as after class.
 - Submit a note with homework.
 - Call the school or a trusted teacher at the school.
- Clear protocols should be in place to encourage parents/guardians to contact the school if they suspect their child is being bullied. This protocol should be created in consultation with parents.
- Information should be disseminated to students/guardians that email is available for reporting bullying to the pastoral care team at Meánscoil Gharman.

Curriculum Implementation:

- Full implementation of the SPHE (Social, Personal, and Health Education) / CSPE (Civic, Social and Political Education) /

RSE (Relationship and Sexuality Education) curricula.

- Lessons should be delivered on topics such as Friendship (Cool School Programme: A Friend in Deed), Cyberbullying (#UP2US), Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying (Stand Up Programme), Diversity, and Interculturalism. The school should list all resources related to the SPHE curriculum along with supports.
- The Garda (Police) SPHE program should be delivered at the post-primary school level. These lessons, provided by Community Gardaí (police), address issues related to personal safety and cyberbullying.
- Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for staff in delivering these programs.
- List the supports currently being used in the school, including external agencies like Belong To (www.belongto.org), About You: Personal Wellbeing Schools Programme, and B4U Decide.ie.

****Links to Other Policies: ****

- List the school policies, practices, and activities related to bullying, e.g., Code of Conduct, Child Protection Policy, Student Supervision Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, Sports Activities Procedures.

****Investigation and Follow-Up of Bullying Incidents: ****

The school's strategy for investigating bullying behaviour, following up on reports, and recording bullying behaviour, as well as the intervention strategies to be used, will be outlined in line with the Anti-Bullying Guidelines (See Section 6.8.9 of the Primary and Post-Primary Anti-Bullying Procedures):

The primary aim of investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve issues and repair relationships, where possible (avoiding blame).

- Students should report any bullying incident to a teacher or another trusted adult within the school system; this is responsible behaviour, not "spreading rumours".
- Parents/guardians should contact the class teacher or any other staff member they are comfortable with regarding incidents of bullying they are concerned about or that have come to their attention through their children or other parents.

(a) Any reported bullying from a school community member will be investigated by the appropriate teacher. It is important that everyone understands that reporting bullying is responsible behaviour.

(b) The goal of the person investigating and addressing the bullying is to resolve the issue within the school and, where possible, improve the relationship between those involved.

(c) The teacher investigating will maintain written records to assist in resolving the problem.

- The victim and alleged perpetrators will be asked to write down their account of the incident in Form A. All reports will be attached to this form. The class teacher will complete a template to record the bullying behaviour.
- Anti-Bullying Form is available in Appendix A, and Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour is available in Appendix B.
- This should be done calmly, with an example of how to handle conflict without resorting to confrontation.

- Records will be kept of each incident and the procedures followed.
- The Deputy Principal and Principal will be kept informed of each incident and will have access to relevant written records.

(d) Students are required to cooperate with the investigation and assist in resolving the issue.

(e) Interviews will be conducted with various people, including students who are not directly involved. This will be done in a way that does not harm anyone and with respect for everyone's rights. If necessary, group meetings may follow individual interviews. Written reports may be requested from those involved.

(f) The person who has been bullying will be given an opportunity to change their behaviour.

(g) Ongoing monitoring will continue.

(h) If bullying continues after the intervention, this will be communicated to the parents of the students involved.

(i) Persistent bullying cases will be dealt with according to the school's Code of Conduct.

(j) Feedback will be received from the involved parties, their parents/guardians, and the Deputy Principal or Principal.

(k) If parents are not satisfied with how the school handled a bullying case under these procedures, they should be directed, as appropriate, to the school's complaint procedures.

(l) If the school, as part of its anti-bullying policy, decides that the bullying behaviour must be documented and immediately reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal, this will be done as appropriate.

(m) In cases of complaints about a staff member, this should be referred directly to the Principal.

(n) According to the "Children First" guidelines and Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, serious cases of bullying will be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE), Child and Family Services, and/or the Gardaí (Police), as appropriate and as outlined in the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

(o) The school has the following support program for students who have been bullied: (See Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Guidelines for Primary and Post-Primary Schools)

All possible help and support will be provided to students who have been bullied and to those who have been engaged in bullying behaviour. This will be done continuously through the school's pastoral care system, through the school counsellor if needed, and through their involvement in various school activities.

7**Effective Supervision and Monitoring of Students: **

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to prevent and deal with bullying and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

8**Prevention of Harassment: **

The Board of Management confirms that the school, in accordance with equality legislation, will take all reasonable steps to protect students and staff from sexual harassment and harassment on any of the nine grounds, including gender, gender identity, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, and membership of the Traveller community.

****Summary for the School's Board of Management: ****

At each Board meeting, the Principal will report on any bullying incidents referred to the HSE/TUSLA (this will also be part of the Child Protection Report). The Principal will also provide a report on:

- The total number of bullying cases reported (based on the Bullying Incident Report Forms – Appendix B) since the last report to the Board.
- Confirmation that each case has been dealt with according to the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

****Support Program for Students Affected by Bullying: ****

- The school will provide all in-school support and opportunities for students affected by bullying to engage in activities aimed at increasing their self-esteem, developing friendships and social skills, and building resilience, e.g.:
 - If additional counselling or support is needed, the school will do its best to arrange this through appropriate agencies. This may be for students who have been bullied or those engaging in bullying behaviour.
 - Students should understand that there are no innocent bystanders, and all bullying behaviour should be reported to a teacher.

****Follow-up Action and Record Keeping: ****

Relevant Teacher/Class Teacher:

- In deciding on the appropriate and adequate handling of a bullying case, the teacher should consider the following circumstances:
 - Has the bullying behaviour ceased?
 - Have issues between the parties been resolved, as much as possible?
 - Has the relationship between the parties been repaired, as much as possible?
 - Any feedback received from the involved parties, from their parents/guardians, or from the Principal or Deputy Principal of the school.
- Follow-up meetings will be arranged with the relevant parties to bring them together later if the student who was bullied is ready and willing.
- If parents are not satisfied with how the school has dealt with a bullying case according to these procedures, they should be directed to the school's complaint procedures.

****Approval and Review of the Anti-Bullying Policy: ****

10. The Board of Management approved this policy on ____16.05.24_____.

11. The policy is available to school personnel, published on the school's website, and a copy will be provided to the Department and to the school patron if requested.

12. The Board of Management will review the policy and its implementation at least once each school year. Written notice of the review will be provided to school personnel, published on the school website (or otherwise made available to parents and students on request), and to the Parents' Association (if applicable). A record of the review and its outcome will be provided to the patron and the Department, if requested.

School Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Overview and Policy Statement

This policy outlines the school's approach to bullying, detailing the steps taken to prevent and address bullying incidents. The goal is to foster a safe, supportive, and inclusive school environment for all students.

2. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as repeated aggression (whether physical, verbal, or psychological) directed at a person or group with the intent to harm. It can take various forms, including physical bullying, verbal bullying, social exclusion, cyberbullying, and emotional bullying.

3. The School's Anti-Bullying Strategy

The school will implement measures to prevent and respond to bullying by:

Active monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school yard, school tours, and extracurricular activities.

Ensuring that all members of the school community (teachers, non-teaching staff, parents, and students) understand how to report bullying incidents and to whom they should report them.

Students will be informed about the appropriate channels for reporting bullying, e.g.:

Speak directly to a teacher at an appropriate time.

Write a note with details of bullying incidents.

Call the school or a teacher with whom they feel comfortable.

4. Curriculum Implementation

The school will fully implement the SPHE/CSPE (Social, Personal, and Health Education/ Civic, Social, and Political Education) curriculum, as well as the RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education) programme.

Specific programs addressing topics such as Cyberbullying (#UP2US), Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying (Stand Up Program), Diversity and Interculturalism will be delivered.

The school will deliver Garda Síochána (Irish Police Force) programs on personal safety and cyberbullying at post-primary level.

Support materials related to SPHE will be listed and provided.

5. Collaboration with Other Policies

The school will link this policy to other relevant policies such as the Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Student Supervision Policy, and the Acceptable Use Policy for ICT.

6. Procedures for Investigating and Responding to Bullying

Investigation: Bullying incidents will be investigated thoroughly, ensuring all parties involved (victim, alleged perpetrator, and bystanders) have an opportunity to share their perspective.

Resolution: The aim of investigations is to resolve the issue and restore relationships, whenever possible.

Record Keeping: A written record of all bullying incidents and the actions taken will be maintained by the teacher overseeing the case.

Follow-up: Continuous monitoring will be conducted to ensure that bullying has ceased. If the issue persists, parents will be informed, and further disciplinary action may be taken.

7. Monitoring and Supervision of Students

The school ensures that appropriate monitoring practices are in place to prevent bullying and to enable early intervention when necessary.

8. Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination

The school will take all reasonable measures to protect students and staff from harassment on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, religious beliefs, age, disability, race, or membership of the Traveller community.

9. Reporting and Recording Bullying Incidents

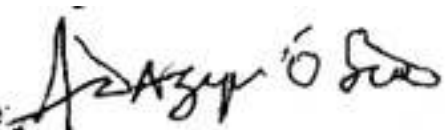
Reports: Any member of the school community can report an incident of bullying. The incident will be recorded on a bullying record form and investigated by the designated teacher.

Documentation: The principal and deputy principal will be kept informed of all bullying cases and have access to relevant documentation.

Follow-up Actions: Follow-up will occur to ensure bullying has stopped, and parents will be informed where necessary. In cases where bullying persists, additional measures will be taken according to the school's code of behaviour.

10. Review of the Anti-Bullying Policy

The Board of Management will review this policy annually. Any changes made will be communicated to all staff and parents, and the policy will be updated on the school website. If requested, a copy of the policy will be provided to the Department of Education and the school's patron.

Síniúthé: 
(Cathaoirleach an Bhoird Bhainistíochta)

Síniúthé: 
(Príomhoide)

Dáta: 16.5.24 Dáta: 16.5.24

Dáta an chéad athbhreithníthe eile: 2025

Appendix A Anti-Bullying Incident Report Form

Date: _____

Teacher: _____

Name of the Student Allegedly Involved in Bullying: _____

Class Group: _____

Name of the Alleged Victim: _____

Class Group: _____

Details of the Incident: _____

Provide the time, location, names of those involved, and a description of the incident from both sides.

Action Taken:

(e.g., referral, intervention, warning, sanction)

Recommendations for Follow-up:

Appendix B Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

Name of Victim:

Name(s) and Class(es) of Alleged Bully(ies):

Type of Bullying:

(Physical aggression, Cyberbullying, Damage to property, Exclusion, Verbal bullying, Name-calling, etc.)

Location of Incident:

(e.g., Classroom, Playground, Hallway, Bus, etc.)

Witnesses to the Incident:

Description of the Bullying Incident and its Impact:

Actions Taken:

Appendix C Checklist for Annual Review of the Anti-Bullying Policy

The Board of Management must annually review the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and its implementation using the following checklist:

Has the policy been formally adopted by the Board?

Has the policy been published on the school website and made available to parents?

Are all staff members familiar with the policy and procedures?

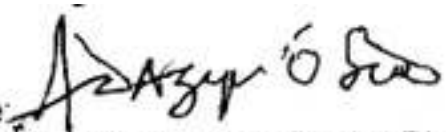
Have the prevention and educational strategies been implemented effectively?

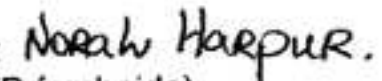
Are bullying incidents being recorded and addressed according to the policy?

Is there evidence that bullying incidents have been resolved effectively?

Are there any complaints from parents regarding how bullying incidents are being handled?

Has the Board of Management conducted an analysis of bullying data to identify trends?

Síniúe: 
(Cathaoirleach an Bhoird Bhainistíochta)

Síniúe: 
(Príomhoide)

Dáta: 16.5.24 Dáta: 16.5.24

Dáta an chéad athbhreithnithe eile: 2025

Summary for the Board of Management

The principal will report any cases of bullying referred to FSS/TUSLA (Child and Family Agency) to the Board at every meeting. A summary of the number of bullying cases reported, based on the Anti-Bullying Incident Forms, will be provided. The principal will also ensure that bullying cases are being dealt with according to the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.