



## Moyne Community School

### 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 Moyne Community School 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 teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):
- Class Tutors
  - Year head
  - Guidance Counsellors
  - Chaplain
  - Deputy Principal
  - Principal

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 (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

- First year Transition Day has a lesson on the various types of bullying and on what to do if a student is bullied or sees another student being bullied
- First years are met individually at the start of the school year by the Guidance Counsellors or Chaplain to ensure that they have no issues including bullying
- All year groups are facilitated through the S.P.H.E. (Social, Personal and Health Education) programme which incorporates bullying information and learning.
- A Mentor system is in place, where Leaving Certificate students act as mentors to small groups of first year students at the start of the new academic year. The mentors receive training in how to support first year students and what to do if a bullying incident is reported to them or if they witness a bullying incident
- Positive reinforcement of good behaviour is encouraged through the Certificate of Exemplary Behaviour presented at the end of the school year to all students who qualify for the award
- Various guest speakers are invited into the school to make presentations on friendships, wellbeing, ICT safety and/or any other topic of benefit
- Teachers are required to explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Year pupils participating in the FUSE Post-Primary Anti-Bullying and Online Safety Programme, developed by the Anti-Bullying Centre (ABC) at Dublin City University.

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*):

- Students should discuss any incident of bullying with a teacher or another trusted adult within the school system; this is responsible behaviour rather than "telling tales".
- Parents/guardians should contact the Principal/Deputy Principal regarding incidents of bullying behaviour which they might suspect or that have come to their attention through their children or other parents.
- In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should be referred immediately to the Principal.

Incidents of bullying behaviour, no matter how trivial, which are drawn to the attention of a teacher, will be dealt with promptly in the following manner:

- Appropriate personnel will interview all of the students involved in a bullying incident.
- The alleged victim and alleged perpetrators of the incident will be spoken to and encouraged to solve the problem.
- The alleged victim and perpetrators will be invited to write down any relevant details.
- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils involved.
- Records will be kept of all incidents and of the procedures that were followed.
- Year Head will monitor progress of students involved in bullying incident by liaising with students involved
- Where the incident is deemed to be minor, a verbal warning will be given to the bully to stop the inappropriate behaviour pointing out how they are in breach of the Code of Discipline and trying to get them to see the situation from the victim's perspective. If deemed appropriate, parents may be contacted. The incident will no longer be considered if there is no recurrence within that academic term.
- If the behaviour persists, the Year Head and the parents/guardians of the victims and bullies will be informed. Thus, they will be given the opportunity of discussing the matter and to help and support their children before a crisis occurs. Appropriate sanctions will be imposed. The incident will no longer be considered if there is no recurrence within that academic year.
- If there is serious incident, perhaps repeated verbal assault or coercion, the Principal should be informed immediately and parents will be informed immediately and appropriate sanctions applied.
- Where the incident is deemed to be more serious (e.g. gross misbehaviour or physical assault), the Principal should be informed immediately and he will inform I, if necessary.
- Where cases, relating to either student or teacher, remain unresolved at school level, the matter should be referred to Board of Management.
- Offenders and victims of bullying may be referred to counselling.
- Sanctions may include:

Disciplinary points will be applied depending on severity of the incident

Detention

Litter Duty

Withdrawal of privileges

Other sanctions as may be deemed appropriate

Suspension

Expulsion.

## **Reporting Procedures**

In any case where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred-

- the parents 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); and
- 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

The relevant teacher must record the bullying behaviour in the standardised recording template at Appendix 3 (and a copy must be provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable) in the following circumstances:

- 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
- 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.

The procedures include oversight arrangements which require that, at least once in every school term, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:

- the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template in Appendix 3 Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.) to the Principal or Deputy Principal since the previous report to the Board and
- confirmation that all of these cases have been, or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and these procedures.

As part of the oversight arrangements, the Board of Management must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation by the school. Written notification that the review has been completed must 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 standardised notification which must be used for this purpose is included at Appendix 4 Antibullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools. A record of the review and its outcome must be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

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*) :

The school offers support to both victim and perpetrator of bullying behaviour

- Support of a School Mentor
- Informal conversations between class teacher and students involved
- Meetings with Year Head
- Referral to Guidance Counsellor or Chaplain
- Counselling support from Chaplain or Guidance Counsellor
- Work with victims on self-esteem and assertiveness
- Perpetrators are encouraged to examine their behaviour and its effects on others
- Anger Management where appropriate
- In the case of serious bullying Chaplain or Guidance Counsellor may hold meetings with parents to involve them in the process of support and behaviour modification.
- Referrals may be made to a specialist service outside school
- Students may be referred to the NEPS psychologist for assessment and/ or behaviour modification

## **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 reviewed and adopted by the Board of Management on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021
11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school and provided to the Parents' Association. 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: Fr Patrick Lennon  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Des Cullen  
(Principal)

Date 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021

**Date of next review: June Meeting of the Board of Management 2022**