



Maynooth Educate Together National School  
Railpark, Celbridge Road  
Maynooth, Co.Kildare

Roll Number: 20292E  
Ph: 01 610 6823  
info@ maynoothet.ie  
www.maynoothet.ie

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## Maynooth Educate Together NS

### Anti-Bullying Policy

#### Preamble.

Maynooth Educate Together N.S is a co-educational school with mainstream classes and classes catering for children with ASD. Our ethos espouses the following principles ie we are multi-denominational, co-educational, child-centered and democratically run. We aim to provide an education that fosters development of childrens talents, abilities and personalities. We support children in developing attitudes which will enable them to become open-minded, creative, respectful, responsible and caring members of society. The school recognises that parents/guardians are the primary educators of their children.

In devising this policy, due consideration has been given to Section 9 of the Education Act 1998. This policy has been formulated by the school Principal and staff in consultation with the Parents Association and has been ratified by the Board of Management.

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 **Maynooth Educate** 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) 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.

#### **(b) Effective leadership**

#### **(c) A school-wide approach**

#### **(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact**

**(e) 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;

**(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**

**(g) Supports for staff**

**(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and**

- (i) **On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.**

**Key elements of a positive school culture and climate**

The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.

The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.

The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.

The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.

The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.

The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.

The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.

The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.

The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.

The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.

The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.

The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.

The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.

Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

**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*.

**Examples of bullying behaviours**

**General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying**

- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.
- Physical aggression
- Damage to property
- Name calling
- Slagging
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
- Offensive graffiti
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Insulting or offensive gestures

## Cyber

- The “look”
  - Invasion of personal space
  - A combination of any of the types listed.
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- **Denigration:** Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation
  - **Harassment:** Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual
  - **Impersonation:** Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name
  - **Flaming:** Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight
  - **Trickery:** Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online
  - **Outing:** Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images
  - **Exclusion:** Purposefully excluding someone from an online group
  - **Cyber stalking:** Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety
  - Silent telephone/mobile phone call
  - Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls
  - Abusive text messages
  - Abusive email
  - Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles
  - Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures
  - Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

## Identity Based Behaviours

Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).

### Homophobic and Transgender

- Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation
- Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner
- Physical intimidation or attacks
- Threats
- Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background
- Exclusion on the basis of any of the above

### Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community

This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:

### Relational

- Malicious gossip
- Isolation & exclusion
- Ignoring
- Excluding from the group
- Taking someone’s friends away
- “Bitching”
- Spreading rumours
- Breaking confidence
- Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear
- The “look”
- Use or terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way

<b>Sexual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching</li> <li>•Harassment</li> </ul>
<b>Special Educational Needs, Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.</li> <li>• Mimicking a person's disability</li> <li>• Setting others up for ridicule</li> </ul>

**4. Relevant Teachers: The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:**

The Class Teacher.

The Principal

The Deputy Principal

*Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.*

**5. Education and Prevention strategies: The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:**

<p><b>School-wide approach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.</li> <li>• The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.</li> <li>• The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.</li> <li>• Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it- prevention and intervention.</li> <li>• An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources</li> <li>• Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)</li> <li>• School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.</li> <li>• Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.</li> <li>• Involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.</li> <li>• Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be included in student journals and displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.</li> <li>• The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (every year).</li> </ul>
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- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; termly student surveys; regular school or year group assemblies by principal, deputy principal, year heads etc.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that pupils know 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.
  - Anti-bully box.
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - Administer a confidential questionnaire once a term to all pupils.
  - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
- Avail of the following supports: National Educational Psychologist, Health Service Executive, An Garda Síochana,

#### **Implementation of curricula**

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme.
- School wide delivery of lessons on all aspects of bullying.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary and post- primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- The school will implement the advice in "Sexual Orientation advice for schools" See Appendix A

#### **Links to other policies**

- Policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying, Code of Behaviour, Child Protections policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance, Sporting activities.

**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:**

## Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

**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;

### 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. All incidents will be recorded in a class 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.

#### **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.
- All class incident books will be stored in the school file room at the end of each school year.

#### **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.

The school should list behaviours that must be recorded and reported immediately to the principal. These should be in line with the school's code of behaviour.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. These records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the classroom and in the Principals office. At the end of each school year these records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the school file room where they will be kept for a period of 9 years.

#### **Established intervention strategies**

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires
- Peer mediation where suitable training has been given.

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

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.

School Teacher Support Team  
Group work ie Circle Time  
Buddy / Peer mentoring system  
Student Council Support Team

- If pupils require counselling of further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with NEPS to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

#### **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.

### **Children with Special Educational Needs**

All teachers and parents/guardians need to be aware that children with special educational needs (which include children with learning, behavioural and emotional difficulties) tend to have greater involvement in bullying. The child with special educational needs may have a heightened sensitivity and may over-react to certain situations. These situations will be addressed according to the Special Educational Needs Programme or Individual Educational Programme of the children concerned. In so far as is appropriate for the individual child, policy procedures will be adhered to.

### **Adult Bullying/Harassment**

The procedure set out below may be initiated in relation to any of the following circumstances, which may occur in the workplace or otherwise in the course of employment.

- Adult bullying
- Sexual harassment or
- Harassment on other specified discriminatory grounds which could in the circumstances be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidating.

Any such behaviour is not acceptable within the school. A complaint of sexual harassment or bullying may result in disciplinary action. Where a complaint of sexual harassment or bullying is not upheld, no action shall be taken against the complainant provided the allegation was made in good faith. If the complaint was brought maliciously, it should be treated as misconduct and the disciplinary procedure invoked.

It is also open to any member who considers that he/she is being discriminated against, to contact his/her CEC District Representative or INTO Head Office with a view to referring a complaint to the Director of Equality Investigations or Labour Court, as the case may be.

For the purposes of the procedures outlined in this document, the METNS adopts the **definition of bullying** set out by the Health and Safety Authority which is:

“Bullying in the workplace is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person or persons. Bullying is where aggression or cruelty, viciousness, intimidation or a need to humiliate, dominate the relationships. Isolated incidents of

aggressive behaviour, while to be condemned, should not be described as bullying. In the workplace environment there can be conflicts and interpersonal difficulties. Many of these are legitimate industrial relations difficulties which should be dealt with through the appropriate industrial relations channels. Only aggressive behaviour which is systematic and ongoing should be regarded as bullying.”

Adult bullying can take many forms which usually include:

- intimidation or harassment
- aggression
- verbal abuse
- humiliation
- undermining
- dominance or abuse of power
- different or unfavourable treatment
- exclusion or isolation

**Key features** of adult bullying are that the behaviour is generally:

- persistent and/or systematic
- unwanted
- subtle
- non-physical

The exercise of legitimate management functions, in a reasonable and fair manner, does not constitute bullying.

## **Bullying/Harassment Procedures**

### **Preamble**

The procedure outlined below is designed to address adult bullying, sexual harassment or other harassment arising in the workplace or otherwise in the course of employment, in a fair and effective manner. In implementing the procedure, it is recommended that emphasis should be placed on assuring the party who considers that he/she is being bullied/harassed that his/her complaint is acknowledged, that the matter will be investigated effectively and sensitively and in accordance with due process.

Equally, where it is found that bullying or harassment has occurred, the emphasis, firstly, is to ensure that the offending behaviour immediately cease and secondly, to help the offending party acknowledge that his/her behaviour is unacceptable and that steps must be taken to address the matter constructively thereby avoiding any recurrence.

It is important to ensure that resolution is achieved at the earliest opportunity. Further, it may be appropriate for the victim or the offended to attend counselling or obtain such other help as may be required.

### **Stage 1: Address the Matter**

1. The party (party A) who considers that he/she is being bullied, sexually harassed or harassed on other specified discriminatory grounds, should decide to address the matter. However, in light of the potential effects of bullying or harassment on an individual, including loss of confidence, extreme upset, anxiety or fear, a party may initially decide to seek INTO counselling, in order to consider the most appropriate application of the procedures, in the circumstances.

2. Party A should keep a record of the pattern of behaviour or instances where he/she considers that bullying/harassment has occurred. The record should contain details such as dates, times, persons present, details of what was said or what occurred.

### **Stage 2: Informally Address the Problem**

1. The party who considers that he/she is being bullied, sexually harassed or harassed on other discriminatory grounds (Part A), should request a meeting with the other party (B), in order to discuss matters. The following should apply:

- where necessary, the meeting may be facilitated by a third party, generally a teaching colleague;
- Party A should clearly outline his/her difficulties and should clearly object to the bullying/harassment and request that it stop
- It is important that party A bear in mind, that the other member of staff may not be aware that his/her behaviour is causing difficulty;
- both parties should seek to resolve their differences and establish a pattern of interaction exclusive of any forms of bullying/harassment;
- Party B may respond to party A at that meeting or if requested, should be given an opportunity to consider his/her response, in which case the meeting may be adjourned. Party B should respond to a constructive manner;
- the resolution, as appropriate, may include any of the following eg. A commitment to cease the particular behaviour, modify the behaviour, plan to eliminate situations where the parties would be in conflict or monitoring.

Alternatively, it may emerge as a result of the discussions between the parties, that there may have been a degree of misunderstanding in relation to certain behaviours and the resolution may make provision for compromise or appropriate explanation or acknowledgement.

2. If there is no satisfactory indication of resolution between the parties, party A should refer the complaint to stage 3, ie formal procedures.

### **Stage 3: Principal Teacher or Chairperson of the Board of Management**

1. Stage 3 provides a mechanism for the principal teacher to intervene and resolve the matter. However, if the principal teacher is one of parties, the chairperson of the board of management should then be involved, in an individual capacity, in order to achieve resolution. In circumstances where the chairperson may also be involved at Stage 2, another member of the board may be designated to intervene.

2. Party A should advise party B that he/she is proceeding with Stage 3.

3. Party A should state his/her complaint in writing and request the principal teacher (or chairperson of the board of management, as the case may be) to investigate the matter.

4. The principal teacher (or chairperson of the board of management, as the case may be) should:

- obtain background details including details of what occurred at the previous stage,
- consider the patterns of behaviour and the timescale
- hear the parties and seek to resolve the matter
- act in a fair and impartial manner and deal with the matter sensitively, having regard to the nature of the problem and the principles of the process
- exercise judgement and make decisions which he/she considers necessary to resolve matters

5. The outcome of the discussions should be noted by the parties

- The matter should be dealt with confidentially
- Where resolution has not been possible and particularly where there is a likelihood of the offending behaviour continuing, either party or the principal teacher (or the chairperson of the board of management as the case may be), should refer the matter to the board of management in accordance with Stage 4.

### **Stage 4: Board of Management**

• It is open to any of the parties or the principal teacher (or chairperson of the board of management, as the case may be) to refer the matter to the board of management for investigation. The referral should be in writing and dated and should include a copy of the written complaint.

• The board of management should consider the issues and investigate the matter.

• The board may enquire into the background of the difficulties including obtaining details on the sequence of initiatives taken at previous stages

• The board or the chairperson of the board may meet teachers individually or collectively and may also request written submissions from the regard also to the principles of due process

• The board may request the principal teacher to furnish a written submission

- The board may afford the parties an opportunity to present their case orally at a board meeting, in each other's presence
- Following oral presentations the board of management may designate the chairperson to meet with the parties again, separately or jointly, if further clarification is required or to work towards resolution
- The board of management may convene a number of meetings in order to achieve resolution
- The board of management shall act in a fair and impartial manner in order to achieve resolution and shall deal with the matter sensitively, having regard to the nature of the problem.

1. Having considered all matters, the board of management should reach a view on the matter not later than 20 school days after receipt of the written request/referral.

2. Where the board of management finds that bullying/harassment has not occurred, both parties should be informed accordingly. No action shall be taken against the complainant provided the allegation was made in good faith. If the complaint was brought maliciously, it should be treated as misconduct and appropriate action taken.

3. Where the board of management finds that bullying/harassment has occurred, the board should deal with the matter appropriately and effectively.

This may include:

- the issuing of a clear warning that bullying/harassment is not acceptable in the school workplace and that it will not be tolerated
- a demand that all forms of bullying/harassment cease and that acceptable patterns of interaction be established between the parties
- an instruction to the offending party that he/she apologise / express regret or give an assurance that the bullying/harassment behaviour will cease
- seeking a commitment to attend counselling or the welfare service
- more serious disciplinary sanctions as may be commensurate and appropriate, such as:

o oral warning

o written reprimand

o written warning

o final written warning

o suspension

o dismissal

4. As part of the resolution, the board of management should monitor the situation and should put systems in place to ensure that it is kept informed that resolutions are being implemented. The board of management should keep matters under review.

## **Training**

This Policy will be reviewed and evaluated regularly and any training needs arising from implementing such a policy will be addressed.

### **Adoption and Review of Policy**

10. This policy **was adopted** by the **Board of Management** on \_\_\_\_\_ [date].

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website 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 and provided to the Parents' Association . A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

### **Review**

This policy will be referred to regularly to check that is being consistently implemented by all staff. Policy will be reviewed by staff annually.

Approved by Board of Management: 15/9/14

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## **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.
- Support the establishment of a students council.



## 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	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

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

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

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

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### 6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) \*

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

### 8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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### 9. 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.

## **4: Sexual Orientation advice for Primary Schools.**

### **GENERAL POINTS**

- Schools can foster a culture that is accepting of difference. This can be expressed where appropriate, rather than making the assumption that everyone understands it.
- An integral part of RSE is learning to respect others; this will include respect for families or individuals who are different from the norm.
- The Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004 provide protection against discrimination on nine grounds, one of which is sexual orientation. The Acts oblige those who manage schools to protect students and staff from discrimination or sexual harassment.
- If children are using the word 'gay' in a negative fashion it is better not to ignore it in the hope that it will go away. The same advice would apply for any instance of bullying.
- Schools are advised to develop a strategy for responding to children who have questions about sexual orientation or who are taunting others about being gay. This should be done in the context of the school's ethos and RSE policy and with the awareness that primary school children are probably too young to engage in any detailed discussion of sexual identity.

### **PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS**

- Depending on the context and the age group of the children, the teacher could ask a child or a class group what they mean by the word 'gay'
- A school could decide on a response to this question, such as 'The majority of people are attracted to people of the opposite sex. This is called being heterosexual. Some people are attracted to people of the same sex. This is called being homosexual or gay.'
- To give factual information like this in an open and straightforward way may help to remove the secrecy which is necessary for any bullying to flourish.
- Homophobic insults should be treated in exactly the same way as racist or other insults – the teacher can calmly explain to the child that such insults are hurtful to the other person and are not acceptable.
- Schools promote a culture of communication which actively discourages abusive name calling