



Maynooth Educate Together NS

Anti-Bullying Policy (2014)

1. Introduction

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB (National Education Welfare Board), the Board of Management of **Maynooth Educate Together National 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

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
 - 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
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including 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)**
- **On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy**

3. Definition of Bullying

In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* (2013) 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
- 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. Relevant Teacher

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*):

- The Class teacher

5. Education and Prevention Strategies

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*):

(5.1) School-wide Approach

- A school-wide approach to fostering respect for all school community members.
- The modelling and practicing of Restorative Practices at whole school level. We promote the concept of a school community whereby everything we do is based on mutual respect. Board of

Management Members, The PTA, staff, parents/guardians, and pupils are all expected to treat one another with mutual respect.

- Regular highlighting and rewarding of pupils at monthly assemblies and regular principal class visits, who model the values espoused by Restorative Practice, i.e., kindness, respect, co-operation, fairness, honesty, personal accountability, problem solving, empathy etc.
- Where possible and appropriate, we primarily focus on positive aspects of behavior management rather than on punishments or sanctions.
- Pupils are encouraged to reflect on poor decisions via the 6 RP questions, which are worn by all staff via their lanyards and are also displayed in pertinent places around the school. Pupils reflect on how their poor decisions have affected others and how they might do things differently next time.
- The promotion of the value of diversity addresses issues of prejudice and stereotyping and highlights the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The Learn Together Ethical Education Curriculum (2022) is implemented across the school whereby the strands of an Ethical Approach to the Environment, Equality and Justice, Values and Ethical Perspectives and Belief Systems are explored and developed in a spiral nature.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extra-curricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Whole-staff and Board of Management professional development training in the area of bullying, to ensure a development of awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it via prevention and intervention.
- Use of behaviour contracts/agreements as required to support children to focus on ceasing certain inappropriate bullying behaviours such as name calling, racist language etc. The contracts will facilitate pupil voice and will encourage pupils to determine appropriate sanctions and rewards for their behaviour. Contracts will be signed by the pupil, teacher, principal, parent(s)/guardian(s),
- 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.
- The school's Anti-Bullying policy is available to view on the school website and a hard copy will be made available to parents/guardians seeking the same via the school office.
- Annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; termly student surveys; regular school or year group assemblies by principal, deputy principal etc.
- Yearly visit from the Maynooth Community Garda to speak on the role of the Garda and on Internet Safety/Cyber Bullying with senior classes
- Encourage a culture of telling, with emphasis on bystanders' importance. 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 notes up with homework.
 - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
 - Worry Box/Worry Monster.
 - 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.
- Referral to the Acceptable Use Policy whereby access to personal technology within the school is strictly monitored. Pupil use of mobile phones, smartwatches and other recording devices are prohibited during school hours.
- Avail of the following supports: National Educational Psychologist, Health Service Executive, An Garda Síochána.
- Cineáltas principles are embraced. Prevention through the generation of empathy and the provision of training which provides a foundation for knowledge, respect, equality, and inclusion. Support; tangible and targeted support based on the continuum of needs. Oversight: visible leadership creates a positive environment for children and all members of the school community. Community: building inclusive school communities connected to society, and that support and nurture positive relationships and partnerships.

(5.2) Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum, RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education) and Stay Safe Programmes as outlined in the Child Safeguarding Statement.
- At the end of each school year, teachers are asked to sign a confirmation form to state that the required programmes as stated above have been taught in their class.
- 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 and The Walk Tall Programme.
- School wide delivery of lessons on all aspects of bullying.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs, 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)

(5.3) Links to other policies

- Our school policies (both ratified or at draft stage), that are particularly relevant to Anti-Bullying, include The Code of Behaviour (Positive Behaviour Policy), The Child Safeguarding Statement, The Wellbeing Policy, The Dignity at Work Charter, Supervision of Pupils Policy, The Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and The Attendance Policy.

6. Procedures for Investigation, Follow-up, Recording and Dealing with Bullying

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*):

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 from the outset.

(6.1) 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 and cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

(6.2) Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach

- 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;
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are asked to keep investigations and conversations between themselves and the class teacher/principal, private and confidential between the parties involved only.
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are asked to respect and keep confidential the identity of the pupil being accused of bullying and to allow due process.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where 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 for the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide particularly 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;

(6.3) 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 to bring them together later if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
 - Appendix 3 will be used in all cases of bullying. Relevant teacher will sign and date the Appendix 3 form once satisfied that bullying has ceased 20 days from when the Appendix 3 form was initially completed.
 - 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.

(6.4) Recording of bullying behaviour

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. 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. Such records will be securely within the classroom.
- 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.

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DE Procedures)

- The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record all cases of bullying
- 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 securely in the classroom and in the principal's office. At the end of each school year these records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the principal's office 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
- Behaviour contracts
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Social Stories
- Recognising, praising, and rewarding those that cease to engage in bystander bullying
- Building resilience
- Friends Programme
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing
- Focus groups involving pupils to illicit pupil voice
- Specific and differentiated targets (via continuum of support plans) to address areas of need and development during support sessions-e.g., adaptive living skills, 1:1 stay safe, life skills, social skills groups, revision of themes such as hygiene, touches, personal space etc.
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires
- Peer mediation where suitable training has been given

7. Programme of Support for working with pupils affected by Bullying

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*):

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, social skills and build resilience e.g.

- Pastoral Care (School Teacher Support Team)
- Social Skills Groups
- Buddy/Peer Mentoring
- Social Stories
- If pupils require counselling or further support, the school will endeavor to liaise with NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service) and Primary Care. This may be relevant for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in bullying behaviour or both.

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 Additional Needs**

All teachers and parents/guardians need to be aware that children with Additional Educational Needs (AEN), which includes children with learning, behavioural, developmental, social, and emotional difficulties, may have increased involvement in bullying. Children with AEN may have heightened sensitivity, decreased social awareness, and may overreact to certain situations at given times. These situations will be addressed according to the Special Educational Needs Programme, Support Plan and/or behavioural plan of the children concerned. As far as is appropriate for the individual child, policy and procedures will be adhered to.

10. Adoption of this Policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ [date].

11. Publication of this Policy

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and has been provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. Implementation of this Policy

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 Teacher Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Patron and the Department of Education.

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendices

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 (Special Educational Needs).
- 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 student's council.

Appendix 3

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es)) *

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

Appendix 4 Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to apply the policy and procedures effectively and consistently in their day-to-day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	

Have all the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends, or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: _____

The Board of Management of _____ wishes to inform you that:

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

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____