

Mercy College Roscommon



MISSION STATEMENT

'In our school we wish to provide a caring working environment for all students and staff, in which every student is helped towards their fullest spiritual, educational, social, cultural and physical development'

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. In accordance with the requirement of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Mercy College Roscommon has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework 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 promotes:
- 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 builds empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and explicitly

addresses 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 incident 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 the 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 primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).

The relevant teacher(s) for investigation and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

Year Head/ Deputy Principal/ Principal

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

- Promotion of a positive school environment as outlined in the School's Code of Behaviour.
- Presentation on the dangers and risks associated with cyberbullying is given to all students by the local community Gardaí.
- Two notice boards will be erected at each end of the school with information on cyberbullying and helpline numbers.
- The SPHE & RSE curriculum.
- Promotion of participation in extra-curricular activities and sport to build self-worth and self-esteem.
- The Cara Programme where a 1st year student is matched with a 5th year student.
- Friendship Week.
- Modelling positive inclusive behaviour within the school.
- Proactive Class Teachers and Year Heads who take an active role in the care of their students during the 8-minute tutor day each day.
- The Guidance Counsellor.
- The "Open Door" policy of the Principal and Deputy Principal.
- The Friends First Resilience programme for 1st year students

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 behaviours are as follows:

- Any student or their parent/guardian can report an allegation of bullying to any member of staff.
- The Template Report Form for Recording Bullying Behaviour (Appendix 1) will be completed by the member of staff to whom the report was made and then given to the Year Head/ Deputy Principal/ Principal
- If the allegation is reported to a non-teaching member of staff then they will report this to the Year Head/ Deputy Principal/ Principal who will then proceed with the school's procedure.
- The incident is logged in the school's Incident Report Book.
- The teacher may be able to resolve the matter with the students involved and therefore no further action is required.
- If the allegation requires further investigation, this is will be carried out by the Year Head/ Deputy Principal/ Principal.
- When and if an incident of bullying is established, the parents/guardians of both parties will be notified immediately by the Year Head/ Deputy Principal/ Principal.
- If an incident of bullying is established, the perpetrator will be asked to sign a Promise Form (Appendix 4) and give an undertaking that this behaviour will not happen again.
- Both parties will be referred to the Guidance Counsellor.
- If the student is to be found to be involved in any further incidents of bullying, than the school's Code of Behaviour will be invoked.

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

- Referral to the school's Guidance Counsellor for counselling.
- Ongoing monitoring of the student's behaviour by the Year Head/Deputy Principal using the Anti-Bullying Confidential Class Questionnaire (Appendix 3).

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 by staff on any of the nine grounds, specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 27/06/2022

11. This policy is 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 (Appendix 5) 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.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Appendix 1 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	<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))*

Outdoor area of school	<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

--

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

--

9. Details of actions taken

--

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Anti-Bullying Policy

Appendix 2 Practical tips for building a positive school culture & climate

- 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 disability or SEN. Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are ignored. 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 breaktime and lunchtime supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school
- Hot spots tend to be in the outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
- Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the work of the Student Council

Anti-Bullying Policy

Appendix 3: Anti-Bullying Confidential Class Questionnaire

Name: _____

(We are asking you to include your name so that we can contact you if we require further clarification)

Class: _____

Date: _____

Questions:	Yes	No
1. Are you happy with the atmosphere in your class?		
2. Is there anyone in your class being picked on or having a hard time?		
3. Is there anyone in your class, picking on other students or giving them a 'hard time'?		
4. Is there anyone being left out or ignored?		
5. Are you being bullied?		
6. Have you experienced any of the following:		
a. Name calling?		
b. Have you been hit, kicked, pushed or has your property been damaged in any way?		
c. Have you been sent abusive text messages, phone calls or e-mails?		
d. Have you been jeered or 'slagged' persistently by others?		
e. Have you had nasty notes or graffiti written about you?		
f. Have you been ridiculed or humiliated by others?		
7. Any further comments you would like to make? (Please use the other side of the sheet, if required)		
8. Have any of the above issues been dealt with before? Please give details. (Please use the other side of the sheet, if required)		
9. If you have answered "yes" to any of the questions 2-6 can you please give details. (Please use the other side of the sheet, if required)		

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Signature of Student: _____

