

Bunscoil McAuley Rice Anti-Bullying Policy

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 Bunscoil McAuley Rice 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.

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.

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.

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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. Mobile phones, smart phones or other such devices with access to social media are not permitted in the school or at any school related activity. The use of mobile phones, smart phones or other such devices with access to social media outside of school is the responsibility of parents/guardians.

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*.

- The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows: The individual class teacher reporting to the school principal, Mr. Moloney. The class teacher will inform the Principal of all incidents being investigated.

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*):

Weekly Assemblies that promote respectful behaviour

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Explicitly teaching respectful behaviour and language

Positively rewarding respectful behaviour with 'Student of the Week'

Being actively vigilant for signs of bullying behaviour especially with vulnerable children

Ensuring that all staff adhere to the school's Acceptable Use Policy

The anti-bullying module of the SPHE programme as it applies during each school year.

The implementation of The Stay Safe Programme.

Substance Abuse Prevention Programme in 6th Class

Webwise

Annual Internet Safety workshops with students from 3rd to 6th class and a parents' information evening.

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 relevant teacher investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour. The relevant teacher will keep a written record of significant instances involving children in their own class. All reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. From the outset, victims should be reassured that they are not to blame. Children who report incidents of bullying should be affirmed and reassured that they are acting responsibly. If a teacher suspects or receives information that bullying has taken place, he/she will gather information from both sides.

The teacher shall take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach and will conduct all investigations sensitively with due regard for the rights of all parties concerned. Some or all of these strategies may be utilised at the teacher's discretion:

Interview in class

Interview outside of class

Individual interview

Group interview

Gathering witness accounts

Getting children to write/draw what happened

Following investigation, the teacher will determine whether bullying has taken place and if so, what

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type. If the teacher determines that an isolated incident which cannot quantify as bullying has occurred, he/she will record the incident and continue to monitor the situation. Negative behaviour that does not meet the definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

- 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.

On receiving a report of bullying on Appendix 3, the principal will interview the parties involved to ensure that a complete picture of events has been established. Pupils will be informed that their behaviour is in breach of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

The principal will contact the parents of the parties involved. They will be informed regarding what has taken place and the actions being taken. All documentation will be stored securely. Sanctions may include:

- a) Reasoning with the child
- b) Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
- c) Temporary separation from peers, friends and others
- d) Loss of privileges
- e) Prescribing additional work
- f) Referral to Principal

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g) Communication with parents

h) Suspension (temporary)

The class teacher will monitor closely the relationships of all involved. The restoration of relationships is the ultimate goal.

Periodic summary reports to the Board of Management :

At least once in every school term, the Principal must provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:

(i) the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template at Appendix 3) since the previous report to the Board

And

(ii) confirmation that all cases referred to at (i) above have been or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the AntiBullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools.

The minutes of the Board of Management meeting must record the above but in doing so must not include any identifying details of the pupils involved.

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 staff supervising relevant yards will be informed regarding bullying behaviour amongst students. The class teacher will monitor the situation closely in the aftermath of a bullying incident to ensure that relationships are rebuilt and relevant supports are in place.

Where appropriate specifically targeted lessons may be taught in class.

Where required, follow up meetings may be arranged to ensure that the incident has been fully resolved.

Some children may require a programme of intervention following the staged approach as outlined in The Continuum of Support. Where School Support Plus is required , a student may referred to NEPs

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for an assessment.

In certain cases , other support services may be recommended to parents e.g. counselling.

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.

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.

- This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 18th October,2023.

Signed by Chairperson: *William Gardiner* Date: *18/10/23*

Signed by Principal: *John Moloney* Date: *18/10/23*

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. 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.

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

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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

9. Details of actions taken

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.