

**St. Macartan's NS**  
**Anti-Bullying Policy**

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of St. Macartan's school has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.
  
2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:
  - A positive school culture and climate which-
    - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
    - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
    - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
  - Effective leadership;
  - A school-wide approach;
  - A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
  - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
    - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
    - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
  - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
  - Supports for staff;
  - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
  - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

- The class teacher in the first instance
- The School Anti-bullying Co-ordinator
- The Principal

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

- Continuation of programmes already in place: Stay Safe, SPHE, RSE, Zippy's Friends (Infants), Walk Tall, Anti-Bullying week and Assembly (February)
- Zero Tolerance of homophobic name-calling
- Self-Esteem promotion eg Circle Time, Public Speaking (in and outside class), Debating, Sporting activities and Adventure Centre

-Cyber-Bullying- Filtering to be maintained and monitored, annual class talks from 1<sup>st</sup> class upwards on internet safety eg maintaining private online profile, no smart phone by pupils in school grounds.

6. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

-All teachers to be trained in Anti-Bullying strategy in April 2014 with refresher courses as necessary

-The strategies employed will follow the National Guidelines mentioned above as follows:

-A pupil or parent may bring a concern to any teacher, who if not the relevant teacher at (4) above, will inform that teacher.

-The preferred strategy in this school is the "No Blame" approach ie the primary aim is to resolve issue and, if possible, restore relationships, rather than to apportion blame.

-In investigating and dealing with bullying each teacher will exercise professional judgement in decision making

-All reports of bullying must be investigated, to help pupils gain confidence in reporting bullying

-Parents and pupils must co-operate with investigations and aid the school where required in resolving issues

-Incidents, in so far as possible, should be investigated and resolved outside of the classroom setting to ensure privacy

-Interviews with all affected parties should be conducted with due sensitivity. Third party pupils, not involved, may also be interviewed to provide further information.

-Seeking the answer to "What, where, who and why" calmly is of paramount importance

-If a group is involved, pupils should be interviewed individually first and then as a group

-Pupils should be shielded from negative peer pressure in a group setting

-When a relevant teacher has determined that bullying has occurred, all parents involved should be contacted at the earliest opportunity, and asked to discuss how they can aid the school in resolving the issue. It will be made clear at an early stage that any disciplinary sanctions taken against a child for breach of school rules is a private matter between the school, pupil and his/her parents/guardians.

-While disciplinary sanctions may be taken against a pupil or pupils found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, the emphasis will be placed on efforts to prevent the child(ren) from carrying out such behaviour again, for example by seeing the issue from the perspective of the child being bullied

-Follow up meetings will be arranged if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable

-If after 20 days the relevant teacher believes that the issue is not resolved, they are obliged to report it to the principal. This does not preclude them from reporting it at an earlier stage. If a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying issue in accordance with these procedures, they must be advised of and follow the schools' Parental Complaints Policy. If they are still not satisfied, having exhausted this procedure, they will be advised of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for children.

-Teachers must keep written record, including dates, of any reports of bullying and action taken. Data Protection Legislation must be adhered to.

-If the school has concerns about continued bullying behaviour they may seek external advice for example NEPS

-If the school has concerns that continued bullying, or even one incident, could be abusive they will follow the school's Child Protection Plan in consulting with the Child and Family Agency through the DLP.

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

-All staff will monitor affected children

-Extra whole class work in promoting self-esteem and self worth will take place where necessary

-Good communication with parents will be maintained

## 8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

## 9. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: Spring 2016