

Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy is rooted in the Mission Statement and aims of the school, fostering partnership between parents, teachers and the community in the interest of children's learning. All members of the school community will be treated with respect and compassion irrespective of social, racial, sexual or ethnic background.

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 **Moate Community 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 homophobic and transphobic bullying in particular.
 - 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 (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 creating a positive school climate are set out in Appendix 2.

Additional useful websites are as follows:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/cb6966-anti-bullying-procedures-for-primary-and-post-primary-schools/>

<https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/bullying-information-for-parents-and-students/>

<http://bully4u.ie/?id=2>

<https://www.webwise.ie/>

<https://antibullyingcentre.ie/>

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

- Year Heads
- Chaplain – Ms. Feeley
- Guidance Counsellor – Ms. Meehan, Ms. N. McCormack, Mr. Lee
- Principal
- Deputy Principal

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

A Student should feel comfortable to report a bullying incident by using one or other of the following approaches:

- Speaking directly to their subject teacher at an appropriate time after class.
- Speaking to their Tutor or Year Head.
- Getting a parent to contact the school to speak to the Year Head.
- Handing up a note with homework to their teacher.
- Communicating with teachers/year head/tutors through the Teams platform.
- Speak to Mentors/fellow students.

A false accusation of bullying against another member of the school community (e.g., parent, student, teacher, visitor etc) will be considered very serious and dealt with as part of the code of behaviour.

5. This policy strives to address bullying behaviour, harassment, and sexual harassment. The policy applies:

- During School time (including breaks).
- Going to and from school.
- During school tours.
- During extra-curricular activities.
- To behaviour outside of the school which seriously impacts on the student's attendance and participation in school life.

School Wide approach to prevent Bullying:

- Each student and parent signs the Code of Behaviour at the start of the year which clearly outlines the respectful and tolerant environment we expect students to adhere to.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. This is carried out through the Wellbeing programme and Religion class.
- 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.
- 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.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- 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.
 - ✓ Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
 - ✓ Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- There is an Acceptable Use Policy in the school which includes the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
- Encourage all members of the school community to be vigilant in detecting and reporting incidents of bullying.
- Information shall be obtained from Primary Schools ref history of bullying within any incoming groups by the school chaplain.
- Prefects and Mentors where possible will receive training in this area.
- Notice Boards/Posters.

- Anti-Bullying awareness programme will be put in place and outside agencies/organisations involved where appropriate.
- Supervision and monitoring of student behaviour, including lockers, yard, corridors and areas with access to computers.

Implementation of Curricula

- SPHE class is used as a tool to raise awareness of the issue of bullying.
- Cross curricular links exist within religion and CSPE.
- Peer education.
- The school will implement the advice in “Sexual Orientation advice for schools” (RSE Primary, see booklet).

Links to other policies:

This policy is consistent with other policies in Moate Community School: please find a sample listed below but this list is not exhaustive

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Code of Behaviour | RSE | Pastoral Care | SPHE |
| Child Safeguarding statement | Internet Safety | AUP | Special Education |
| Mentors/Games Committee/Student Council | Induction of new staff | Guidance | Dignity in the Workplace |
| Admissions policy | Health and Safety Policy | ICT Policy | Data Protection |

The policy links with various aspects of the curriculum at different times eg. SPHE, CSPE, Religion, English etc.

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*):

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 member of staff in the in the school.

- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, must 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. Each person must acknowledge and act upon their duty of care.

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;
- 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 may meet as a group; and
- 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 ***relevant 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; and
- 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*** (teacher dealing with the issue) 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; and
- 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.

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 record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them through the year head and referral procedures in the school. 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.

Informal-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 recording -Appendix 3:

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 following types of behaviour may be recorded formally on the Incident form:
In serious cases of Cyber Bullying, Exclusion, Physical Bullying, Relational Bullying.
This list is not exhaustive and may be added to as the school sees fit.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the *relevant teacher* in question and a copy maintained by the principal in a central secure location. The confidentiality of the student will be respected at all times and all records will be stored in a secure location.

Reporting to the BOM:

The Principal of MCS in accordance with recommendations will provide a report to the BOM at each meeting. This report will include:

1. The overall number of bullying cases reported by means of Appendix 3
 2. Confirmation that all cases referred to (a) have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the Schools Anti –Bullying Policy
7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:
- All cases of Bullying will be treated with the utmost confidence.
 - All actions listed in Actions to Prevent Bullying are part of the school's programme to offer supports to students, staff, and parents within MCS.
 - Referral – students may be referred to the Guidance counsellor/Chaplain or if necessary to an external psychologist. This referral will apply both to the bully and the student who was bullied.
 - Inform staff - staff will be informed where appropriate.
 - SPHE programme - bullying is covered as a topic each year at Junior Cycle and also at Senior Cycle.

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 _____
[date].
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 of next review: _____

Appendix 1

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

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

Signed _____ Principal

Date _____ Date _____

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, act 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.
- Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/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 establishment and work of student councils.

Appendix 3

| Record Form | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------|--------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Name of Pupil and Class | | | | | |
| 2 | Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) alleged to be engaged in bullying behaviour | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| 3 | Source of Bullying concern/report | | | | | |
| 4 | Location of Incidents (if known) | | | | | |
| 5 | Name of person who reported the concern | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| 6 | Type pf Bullying Behaviour reported | | | | | |
| 7 | Where behaviour is regarded as identity based bullying indicate relevant category | | | | | |
| | Homophobic | Disability | SEN related | Racist | Traveller related | Other (Specify) |
| | | | | | | |
| 8 | Brief Description of the behaviour and its impact | | | | | |
| 9 | Details of actions taken if any | | | | | |

Signed: _____

Date: _____ (submitted to relevant teacher)

Appendix4:

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 effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures 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 of 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 _____

