

St. Malachy's Boys' National School
Anti-Bullying Policy
'Building Confidence to Realise Potential'

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 Malachy's BNS 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
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community.

 - ***Effective leadership:***
 - The BOM has overall responsibility to ensure that this policy is effective, sustainable and measured. The BOM must ensure that accountability is of the highest standard and frequently appraise the outcomes of the strategies and measures contained within the policy
 - The Principal of St. Malachy's Boys' National School, as key leader, strongly influences attitudes and sets standards in relation to dealing with bullying
 - Teachers must act as good role models and not misuse authority, but be fair, clear and consistent in their disciplinary measures.

 - ***A school-wide approach:***
 - A whole community approach to the problem of bullying is required and St. Malachy's Boys' School community comprises of management, teachers, non-teaching staff, pupils, parents/guardians
 - Beyond the school community, bullying behaviour may extend to outside of school. Where this negatively impacts on a school - parents and pupils have a responsibility to support the school in helping to address the issue. This applies particularly (but not exclusively) to cyber bullying
 - The assistance of Gardaí, Tusla and Community Workers may be required in some cases;
 - Collective vigilance is needed throughout the whole school/community sector to identify and deal with issues around bullying in a fair and equitable manner.

St. Malachy's Boys' National School
Anti-Bullying Policy
'Building Confidence to Realise Potential'

- ***A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact:***
 - St. Malachy's Boys' School endeavours to put in place appropriate systems to ensure that ALL relevant members of the school community (parents, pupils, staff and the wider community) have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour as defined in this policy.
- ***Implementation of education and prevention strategies*** (including awareness raising measures) that:
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
- ***Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils:***
 - Staff members have a distinct responsibility to ensure that supervision of pupils in class is effective and consistent
 - Supervision in playground areas must be managed and conducted effectively, with particular attention given to 'hot spots' or 'hot times' eg arrival & dismissal
 - The lollipop man/lady is a significant support in addressing and identifying potential bullying scenarios
 - Ancillary Staff are well placed to inform if any behaviour which may constitute bullying is noticed
- ***Supports for staff:***
 - Regular discussion and review of policy and procedures is essential to support staff on a continuous basis
 - All staff must have a uniform interpretation of what is expected in relation to bullying, how to identify possible bullying behaviours, how to manage disclosures and how to deal effectively with incidents of bullying within the classroom context
 - Staff must be aware that supporting one another is a key aspect of prevention and new/inexperienced members of staff must be given every opportunity to discuss concerns and model best practice
 - CPD in relation to Anti Bullying Strategies will be supported and encouraged for all members of 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:***
 - Annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation by staff and the BOM.

St. Malachy's Boys' National School
Anti-Bullying Policy
'Building Confidence to Realise Potential'

3. Definition: 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 (*see Appendix A*):

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying

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* and can be seen in **appendix A**.

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

All teachers and the principal

5. Education and Prevention Strategies:

The Education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:

The main vehicle for delivery of prevention strategies will be the schools SPHE programme. Resources and initiatives currently in use are:

- Zeeko internet safety programme (including Cyberbullying)
- Webwise lessons (Cyberbullying)
- The Stay Safe Programme
- RSE programme

St. Malachy's Boys' National School
Anti-Bullying Policy
'Building Confidence to Realise Potential'

- Walk Tall
- Grow in Love religious programmes
- Prim Ed. Countering Bullying and Conflict Resolution Series
- Circle of Friends (NEPs programme)
- Posters addressing friendship and anti-bullying are displayed on our Wellness Wall and throughout the school
- Friendship/Buddy Bench
- Anti-Bullying/Friendship week - to coincide with the Nationwide Anti-bullying week and includes initiatives such as, compliment jars, odd sock day, poster competition, making new friends in the yard, random act of kindness, etc.
- Books addressing cyber-bullying are stored with SPHE resources in Mrs. Hughes' room.
- Bullying Interventions (Ken Rigby) as recommended by DES
- As more relevant and up to date materials become available our SPHE co-ordinator (Mrs Hughes) will evaluate and disseminate to staff

6. The school's procedures for (A) investigation, (B) follow-up and (C) recording of bullying behaviour.

A. Investigating and Reporting of Bullying behaviour:

- 1) Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- 2) As with all instances of misbehaviour in school, if there is an accusation of bullying in school, the class teacher (or the teacher on yard, if the incident occurs on yard) will investigate and deal with the incident in the first instance. The teacher on yard will discuss the incident with the child(ren)'s class teacher. The principal will be informed of the incident.
- 3) 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).
- 4) The teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- 5) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. 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

St. Malachy's Boys' National School
Anti-Bullying Policy
'Building Confidence to Realise Potential'

they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.

- 6) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
- 7) Parents 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. It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.
- 8) Teachers are expected to take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- 9) Where possible, Incidents will 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
- 10) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner. The teacher should keep informal notes of the progress of the investigation and these should be stored in a secure manner.
- 11) If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- 12) Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
- 13) It may, in certain circumstances, be appropriate to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident/s. This will be at the discretion of the investigating teacher.
- 14) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will 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 parents an opportunity of discussing ways in

St. Malachy's Boys' National School
Anti-Bullying Policy
'Building Confidence to Realise Potential'

which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.

- 15) Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him how he is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- 16) It will be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that any sanctions imposed as a result of bullying behaviour, will be in line with the schools behaviour policy.

B. Follow-up actions:

- 1) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may 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.
- 2) In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded in the appropriate template. See Appendix B.
- 3) 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; and
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
- 4) Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- 5) In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

St. Malachy's Boys' National School
Anti-Bullying Policy
'Building Confidence to Realise Potential'

C. Recording of Bullying Behaviour:

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

All records will be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

- 1) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same. Records taken by the teacher during the investigation phase of any report of bullying will be retained by the teacher in a secure location. A copy of the same will be given to the principal.
- 2) If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher will 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.
- 3) The relevant teacher will use the recording template at Appendix B to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
 - a) in cases where he/she considers that bullying behaviour has occurred.

In this circumstance, the recording template at Appendix B must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at Appendix B does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

Teachers' records are retained in a secure space in the teachers' classroom. All report templates given to the Principal will be retained in the filing cabinet in the Principals Office.

7. 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*).

- A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied will provide opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed e.g.
 - Buddy / Peer mentoring
 - Student Council
 - Circle time
 - Social skill groups

St. Malachy's Boys' National School
Anti-Bullying Policy
'Building Confidence to Realise Potential'

In certain cases, whereby it is identified that such pupils are in need of counselling, the school will liaise with the parents to access the relevant support.

- A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour will also be part of the school's intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour will need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities will be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. It is, therefore, important that the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth. e.g. Classroom SPHE programme; Social skills groups; Circle time.

Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

Methods which may be used: (Based on 6 Approaches by Rigby)

- The traditional disciplinary approach (*Sanctions, if imposed, will be in line with School's Code of Behaviour*)
- Strengthening the victim (*friendship area for games and co-operative activities may be used*)
- Mediation (*meetings arranged with a teacher to mediate*)
- Support Group method (*Buddy System, Circle time, Social group*)
- Restorative Practice (*Group activities, social skills, group*)
- The Method of Shared Concern (*co-operative group activities*)

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.

St. Malachy's Boys' National School
Anti-Bullying Policy
'Building Confidence to Realise Potential'

- 10.** This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 12th December 2023.

- 11.** 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.

- 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 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.

St. Malachy's Boys' National School

Anti-Bullying Policy

'Building Confidence to Realise Potential'

APPENDIX A – Different Types of Bullying

<p>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community. • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • The "look" • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
<p>Cyber</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denigration: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation • Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name • Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology
<p>Identity Based Behaviours</p>	<p>Continues overleaf:</p>

St. Malachy's Boys' National School

Anti-Bullying Policy

'Building Confidence to Realise Potential'

Identity Based Behaviours	
Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).	
Gender, Homophobic and Transgender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
Race, nationality, religious, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying.</p> <p>Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • "Bitching" • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The "look" • Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person's disability • Setting others up for ridicule

St. Malachy's Boys' National School
Anti-Bullying Policy
'Building Confidence to Realise Potential'

APPENDIX B - 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	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other (specify)	

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

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other (specify)	

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	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

St. Malachy's Boys' National School
Anti-Bullying Policy
'Building Confidence to Realise Potential'

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

Gender	Civil Status	Family Status	Sexual Orientation	Religion	Age	Disability (SEN)	Race	Membership of Traveller Community

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal _____