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**A81 EA37.**

***Principal: Ms F Whelan***

***Vice Principal: Mrs R Campbell***

**Anti-Bullying Policy**

**1: Rationale:**

St Michael’s National School community believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation. St Michael’s National School will not tolerate bullying of any kind. Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the well -being of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

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. Michael’s National School, Donaghmoyne 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: Key Principles**

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)
* On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

**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:

* 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.*

**Examples of bullying behaviours**

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| **General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying** | * Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g., sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. * 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. |
| **Cyber** | * **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 |
| **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). | |
| **Homophobic and Transgender** | * 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, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community** | * 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** | This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:   * 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** | * Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching * Harassment |
| **Special Educational Needs,**  **Disability** | * 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 |

**4: The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:**

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| The Relevant Teachers in this school are:  1: Class Teacher  2: Deputy Principal  3: Principal  **Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.** |

**5: The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-**

**bullying, 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*):**

* A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
* Display key respect messages throughout the school.
* The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
* 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.
* An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
* Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
* School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
* Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
* The school’s anti-bullying policy /Code of Behaviour policy are available for parents to view on the school website.
* The implementation of regular (e.g., per year/per term/per month/per week) whole school awareness measures e.g., a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Week.
* Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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 they report incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
* 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.
* Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.

**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 class teacher will have primary responsibility for investigating alleged cases of bullying. However, dependent on the seriousness of the actions involved, the class teacher may decide to involve the Deputy Principal/ Principal in accordance with our Code of Behaviour.
* Where an alleged incident of bullying involves students from a number of classes, the class teachers will liaise to carry out the investigation. The primary aim will be to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame
* All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the class teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in ‘telling’. It will be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly. In addition, non-teaching staff must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the class teacher. Where there has been a report of an incident during break time involving students in one class the class teacher will investigate.
* In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example of dealing effectively with conflict in a non-aggressive manner. Fair procedures will apply in all investigations.
* Where deemed appropriate incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure privacy of all involved. Some incidents may need to be investigated discretely in the classroom. 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.
* 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.
* If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first to allow all parties to relay their “side of the story”. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member may be asked his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other’s statements.
* Where appropriate, those involved may be asked to write down their account of the incident(s).
* In cases where it has been determined by the class teacher that bullying has occurred, the parents of parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions taken (by reference to the school policy). The school will give the parents opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils

**7: The school’s programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying (both victims and those involved in the bullying behaviour) is as follows (see section 6.8 of the Anti- Bullying procedures for Primary and Post Primary schools.**

* Provide opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience (as per SPHE programme).
* Encourage friendship and small- group team-building exercises focused on affected students.
* Close monitoring of pupils (those bullying and those being bullied) in class/ on yard in the weeks following an incident of bullying.
* Follow up meetings with students following any incident of bullying.
* Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.
* Involvement of student council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g., Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime pals and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
* Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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 they report incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
* 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.

**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.

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps as 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 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 of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: October 2022 Date: October 2022