



## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

**Policy ratified by Board of Management: 28/03/2014**  
**Reviewed: 17/02/2022**  
**Reviewed 12/09/2022**  
**Next review due September 2023**

**School Patron: The Right Rev. Dr. Paul Colton,  
Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross**

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**Chairperson: Mr Daniel Emerson**

**Principal: Ms Jill Horan**

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. Multose National 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.

### **How our school promotes positive relationships**

- The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
- The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
- The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
- The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.
- The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
- The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
- The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a whole school basis.
- The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life skills.
- The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.

- The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

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*.

## Examples of bullying behaviours

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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures</li> <li>• Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</li> </ul>
<p><b>Identity Based Behaviours</b></p> <p><b>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation</b> (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).</p>	
<p><b>Homophobic and Transgender</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation</li> <li>• Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation</li> <li>• Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner</li> <li>• Physical intimidation or attacks</li> <li>• Threats</li> </ul>
<p><b>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background</li> <li>• Exclusion on the basis of any of the above</li> </ul>
<p><b>Relational</b></p>	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malicious gossip</li> <li>• Isolation &amp; exclusion</li> <li>• Ignoring</li> <li>• Excluding from the group</li> <li>• Taking someone's friends away</li> <li>• "Bitching"</li> <li>• Spreading rumours</li> <li>• Breaking confidence</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear</li> <li>• The “look”</li> <li>• Use of terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching</li> <li>• Harassment</li> </ul>
<b>Special Educational Needs, Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues</li> <li>• Mimicking a person's disability</li> <li>• Setting others up for ridicule</li> </ul>

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (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 dealing with cases of bullying involving pupils in his/her classroom. A record of incidents of repeated bullying will be kept on the school's data system.
- There is a rota of teachers who supervise the playground during breaktimes. They may take responsibility, in conjunction with the class teacher, for incidents of bullying during breaktimes. The class teacher will keep a record of the incidents.
- In cases of repeated bullying or a serious physical or verbal attack, the Principal (or Deputy Principal) will be consulted and may investigate and deal with the incident.

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 (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

## **Our School Education and Prevention Strategies**

- The school ethos statement is provided to all families when they apply for enrolment in St. Multose N.S. This clearly outlines our inclusive and respectful attitude towards all pupils and members of the school community irrespective of ethnic background, religion, gender, sexual orientation, social background, family circumstances, educational achievement, physical characteristics or intellectual functioning.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying, as required and when/where available to ensure that all staff develop 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 and training 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 (usually the class teacher). Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Our R.E. programme focuses on moral values such as; truthfulness, justice, fairness, sensitivity to others and civic responsibility. Pupils are encouraged to discuss and understand their place in the world and their responsibility in it.
- Our S.P.H.E. programme uses Stay Safe, Walk Tall, Be Webwise, Relationships and Sexuality Education, My Selfie, Friends for Life, Prim-Ed Health programmes, set of reference books called Bullying amongst others. Children are actively engaged in exploring their feelings, coping mechanisms and strategies for dealing with bullying situations: e.g. Circle time, Friends for Life. They learn about understanding and accepting difference and the rights of all people. (U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child)
- The school occasionally has visits from the local Gardaí, the Kinsale Youth and Mental Health worker and other relevant professionals who can assist children with issues relating to different types of bullying and self-esteem.
- Pupils also investigate aspects of themselves and the world around them through curricular areas.
- Pupils learn co-operation, teamwork, tolerance and understanding of others during P.E. lessons, school matches, field trips and other extra-curricular activities.



- Our school has an Acceptable Usage policy in the school which ensures that access to technology, within the school, is strictly monitored. The pupils from 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> class sign a 'Rules of Responsible Internet Use Form'. Mobile phones and Smart devices are not allowed to be switched on in school and only children with written parental consent and with exceptional circumstances are allowed to bring mobiles to school. (i.e. where a child has to walk to and from school or the school bus)
- Teachers help children to act responsibly by modelling respect, fairness, positive attitude, positive communication, effective listening skills, perspective talking and social skills. Each teacher endeavours to create a warm nurturing environment and effective curriculum in their classrooms.
- We encourage active parental involvement in our school. Good communication between all members of the school community is fostered leading to greater academic, social and personal success.
- SNAs and SEN teachers will also help children with special educational needs to understand the consequences of bullying and to protect them from bullying.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school with their enrolment forms and as changes are made to it. This is also available on the school website.
- Pupils are expected to adhere to the Code of Behaviour and Anti-bullying policy at all times: including play time, in the P.E. hall, on field trips etc.
- 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. The acronym 'STOP' is referenced and discussed i.e. 'several times on purpose' and 'start telling other people.'
- 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: i.e. with homework or 'I wish my teacher knew box...' (1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Class) Time to Talk Programme will be implemented in Junior and Senior Infants. Pupils will be provided with the opportunity to share their feelings.
  - 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.

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*):

### **Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying**

**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 teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escort and parent volunteers must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant class teacher or in extreme cases, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal;

#### **Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach (see section 6.8.9)**

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 may be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved may be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- 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 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;
- 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 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
- 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.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the

parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.

- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

### **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 written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. Consideration needs to be given to where the records will be made e.g. digitally. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher.
- 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.

#### **Formal Stage 1-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.
- The school in consultation with the relevant teachers/s should develop a protocol for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher.

#### **Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures and must be adhered to)**

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.
- c) The following behaviours that must be recorded and reported immediately to the principal. These should be in line with the school's code of behaviour: a serious act of aggression, cyber-bullying, possession of drugs, possession of a weapon, sexual assault.
- d) When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. Records will be kept in pupils' blue folders in the office, until pupils reach the age of 21. Only the relevant teacher and the Principal will have access to these records.

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*):

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g. Group work such as circle time, SPHE lessons, the Friends for Life Programme.
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are **no innocent bystanders** and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

## 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.

- There is a rota of teachers to supervise children at breaks.
- Class teachers and SNAs are expected to be in the yard from 8.50 a.m. as children arrive.
- Pupils are escorted to the gate at the end of the day and do not leave the grounds until released by the teachers on duty.
- Pupils are made aware of out-of-bounds areas in the school yard and must stay within sight of supervisory staff.

- The school rules are regularly discussed and the atmosphere in the school is of a caring, loving and inclusive nature, where pupils realise that SNAs and teachers will look after them and are open to chatting about issues.
- Our school has well developed SPHE and R.E. programmes which foster good citizenship and family relationships, moral values; i.e. caring, sharing etc.
- Senior pupils take great care and interest in the well-being of younger pupils and are encouraged to help them when they need it at breaks or on field-trips. They know how to get help and to report any incidents of challenging behaviour, including bullying, they observe or hear about.
- All Internet sessions are supervised and pupils are taught about the dangers associated with cyber-bullying and chatrooms (at age-appropriate level). (N.B. the Schools' Broadband Programme has blocked all social networking sites on the basis that they are not necessary and take up too much of the bandwidth, which has been provide for educational puposes only.)
- At present, the chrome books each have an assigned email address, which are used for educational purposes only. These are monitored regularly by the class teacher. Pupils have been taught how to use safe/secure email accounts.

## **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 28/03/2014.

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 (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: \_\_\_\_\_

## 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, acts 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:

Template for recording bullying behaviour as per Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (September 2013)