MONASTERY NATIONAL SCHOOL

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Monastery National School Anti-Bullying Policy 2023

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 Monastery 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-
        i. is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
        ii. encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
        iii. 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-
        i. build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
        ii. explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
    - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
    - Supports for staff;
    - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
    - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows: Class teachers and / or Principal.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

- At the beginning of the school year all classroom teachers create class rules, review school rules and teach *The Molanó Code* to their students. School rules and the Molanó Code are included in all senior pupils' homework journals.
- Cross curricular teaching
- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum including dealing with topics of bullying, self esteem, conflict resolution, decision making, personal safety and personal feelings.
- Stay Safe Programme is taught in the school and one component specifically deals with bullying.
- Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) deals with sexuality and relationships.
- Multi-cultural week promotes diversity, celebrates difference and promotes tolerance.
- Ardee School Completion Programme's school transfer programme with sixth class. This programme includes an anti-bullying module for fifth class. They also work with boys who are at risk of being bullied or bullying others.
- Friendship Week at the beginning of the school year involving pupils, parents and teachers. The emphasis is placed upon friendship, understanding, awareness and the reporting of bullying if necessary.
- Staff Meeting Agendas.
- A training workshop for staff on anti-bullying procedures for Primary schools.
- Our School Internet, Network, New and Emerging Technologies Acceptable Use Policy is provided to all parents on enrolment. And our Cyber Bullying Policy is available on our school website.
- School Assemblies promote positive behaviour in the following ways. Monthly Awards for The Student of the Year are made at each assembly. The Billy Hennessy and Maura Melia Awards also promote positive behaviour through their annual awarding.

- The Sixth Class Challenge is a self-motivational and self-regulation programme that promotes independence and resilience as part of our 6th class pupils' transition to secondary school. It is an integral part of our positive school culture.

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;

Procedures for Investigating and dealing with bullying
The school's procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows;

i. 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);

ii. 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;

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

iv. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

v. 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;

vi. It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;

vii. Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;

viii. Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;

ix. 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;

x. 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;

xi. If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should 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;

xii. Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;

xiii. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);

xiv. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents 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 parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils;

xv. 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;

xvi. It must be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, that is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school;

xvii. 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. This can have a therapeutic effect;

xviii. 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 by the relevant teacher in the specified bullying recording template;

xix. 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;

xx. 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;

xxi. 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 rights to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

The procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour are as outlined below and all records will be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will also adhere to the following:

i. 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;

ii. 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.

iii. The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour where the teacher establishes that bullying behaviour has occurred.

In circumstances where bullying has re-occurred within 20 days the relevant teacher must consult the principal.

The recording template at Appendix 3 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 3 does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

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

   - Early intervention including early identification and support of pupils who are potential bullies or victims of bullying.
   - Individual Behaviour Plan as part of a School Continuum of Support for pupils at risk.
   - Counselling of pupils by teachers / Principal.
   - Counselling of pupils by Ardee School Completion Programme.
   - Support of families affected by bullying via the Home-School Teacher (HSCL).
   - HSE intervention via Child and Family Clinic, Drogheda as necessary.
   - NEPS Assessment of pupils where necessary.

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. This includes school time supervision rota, pre-school and post-school supervision of pupils exiting the school and partnership with the school community. The latter includes school traffic wardens, bus driver, local shop keepers, local Gardaí and parents.

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 initially reviewed and adopted by the Board of Management on 4/10/18. It is reviewed annual at the first Board of Management meeting of the school year.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and is 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, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and is 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.

Signed: *Canon Peter Murphy* Peter Murphy Date: 2/10/23

(Chairperson of Board of Management)//

Signed: *Jim McGee* Jim Mc Gee *Date*: 2/10/23

(Principal)

Date of next review: Autumn 2024