St. Michael's School

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Introduction

At St. Michael's School, we provide a secure, healthy, caring environment which values the uniqueness of each person. *Mission Statement*

We strive to build an educational system which is based on respect for persons, on the recognition of their potential and on the acceptance of human limitations.

St. Michael's School does not tolerate or condone bullying of any form or at any level in the school community.

Staff members of St. Michael's School accept responsibility, under the direction of the Principal and In-School Management Team, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive/harassing behaviour by any member of the school community.

Bullying affects the atmosphere of a class and the climate of the school. It is essential that all staff should be aware of how bullying manifests itself, and the positive steps that need to be taken in response to bullying. This is particularly relevant in the current pandemic with regard to remote learning and the increase in online activities. Bullying does not just affect those individuals involved. Others who see it happening are affected also.

The involvement of all members of the school community in developing, formulating and reviewing this policy on Anti-Bullying promotes partnership, ownership and implementation of 'a living policy'.

Rationale

The Department of Education requires all schools to have a written policy on Anti-Bullying.

In accordance with the requirements of the Educational (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board, the Board of Management of St. Michael's 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.In April 2023, the Minister for Education announced the publication of Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying, which was brought to the attention of all staff.

Relationship to Characteristic Ethos of the School

As a Catholic school, inspired by the vision of Louise de Marillac and the philosophy of Vincent de Paul, in partnership with parents, staff and the Archdiocese of Dublin, we seek to create a community based on Gospel values which are enshrined in all school policies and practices. *School Ethos*

We are a welcoming and inclusive community. Pupils of all religious denominations are enrolled and we are committed to building empathy and respect.

Aims

St. Michael's School aims to foster healthy personal relations within a positive, caring and supportive school community. We aim to create an atmosphere in which staff, parents/guardians and pupils are encouraged to disclose / report any incident of bullying, knowing that measures to deal with it are in place. Positive steps are being taken to eradicate bullying.

Aims relating to this policy are to:

- Create a positive school atmosphere that ensures a safe and caring environment for all our pupils, staff and members of the school community.
- Build a sense of self-confidence, self-worth and self-esteem.
- Promote respectful relationships across the school community.
- Adopt a whole-school approach with effective leadership and a shared understanding of what bullying is and it's impact.
- Encourage pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- Raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/guardians.
- Provide support for all members of staff.
- Ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- Devise consistent measures to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour.
- Develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- Develop procedures for consistent recording and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.
- Create a situation whereby bullying behaviour is dealt with effectively, fairly and in a manner which will benefit the victim through the acquisition of skills to counter bullying behaviour.

Guidelines

Key Principles of Best Practice

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
- a school-wide approach
- a shared understanding of what bullying is and it's impact
- implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that:

- o build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
- o explicitly address the issues of cyber bullying and identity-based bullying including, in particular, sexuality and transgender based bullying at a developmentally appropriate level.
- 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.

Definition of Bullying

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, extortion, isolation and persistent name calling,
- Cyber bullying – with developments in modern technology, pupils can be victims of non-contact bullying via mobile phones, the internet and other personal devices,
- Identity-based bullying such as sexuality and transgender based bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community, bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs and bullying based on religious beliefs.

Bullying involves behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts either physically, emotionally or educationally another individual or group. Bullying can be manipulative, making the pupil do something they should not, or deliberately engineering their discomfort. Some pupils may not recognise that they are being bullied or that their own behaviour might be seen by someone else as bullying.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour do not fall within the definition of bullying. This and other negative behaviours are 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.

For additional information on different types of bullying, reference should be made to Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Examples of Bullying behaviours

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 / tormenting • 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', staring at someone in a hostile manner. • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
Cyber	• **Denigration**: Spreading rumours, 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 calls. • Abusive telephone/mobile calls. • Abusive text messages. • Abusive communication on social networks, e.g. Facebook, Ask.fm, Twitter, YouTube 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 or exclusion - Ignoring - Excluding from the group - Taking someone's friends away 'bitching' - Spreading rumours - Breaking confidence - Talking loud enough so the victim can hear - The 'look' - Use of 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.

Main Elements of our Anti-Bullying Policy

- Prevention through the School Mission Statement and Ethos, teaching and support offered to pupils
- Procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of bullying, and for recording such cases, so that analysing patterns of bullying behaviour is effective.
- Support for pupils who have been bullied and support and guidance for the bully.
- Advice for parents/guardians (Appendix 1).

Rights & Responsibilities

The ways in which people interact with each other significantly affect each person's sense of self-worth, belonging and well-being. The fostering of high-quality interpersonal relationships among the In-School Management Team, Teachers, SNAs, pupils, parents and ancillary staff is a responsibility shared by everyone.

The Class Teacher will endeavour to solve all alleged bullying incidents at class level. Individual teachers will take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with this anti-bullying policy. The primary aim for the Class Teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationship of the parties involved (rather than apportion blame).

Relevant Teachers:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- In-School Management Team
- All Teachers. Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying if circumstances warrant it.

o ***Board of Management***

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring that all members of the school community are enabled to deal effectively with bullying. The Board is committed to providing time and resources for the implementation of the policy. The Board will ensure that proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to prevent bullying and to deal with incidents appropriately as they arise.

o ***School Staff***

The school staff will:

- foster an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance.
- model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.

- explicitly teach what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like and feels like in the classroom and around the school.
- display key respect messages in classrooms and involve pupils in developing these messages.
- notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- address the use of discriminatory and derogatory language.
- help pupils develop self esteem through celebrating individual differences, achievements, acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and manners and providing opportunities for success throughout the curriculum and school.
- implement prevention and intervention strategies which build and maintain a safe learning environment for the whole school community.
- educate and empower pupils to deal with conflict in constructive ways.
- teach pupils to recognise bullying behaviour and encourage them to use their voice to say 'no' to that behaviour.
- help pupils to develop empathy by discussing feelings and trying to put themselves in the place of others.
- be vigilant, respond sensitively and caringly to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying.
- investigate all disclosed incidents of bullying.
- document serious bullying incidents using the Bullying Incident Report Form (Appendix 3).
- discuss the school's Anti-Bullying Policy with the pupils.
- use behavioural management strategies which focus on problem solving
- enable the pupils to take an active role in finding a solution to problems.

As defined in the Child Protection Policy, confidentiality is of paramount importance in all dealings with pupils. Active listening and vigilant recording must be carried out by all staff.

o *Pupils*

Pupils are expected to:

- be tolerant.
- have mutual respect for each other.
- be able to identify bullying behaviour.
- not bully others.
- tell if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied.
- report incidents of bullying, including cyber bullying and identity based bullying, to school staff.
- Feel empathy for targeted members of the school community and as a result take safe and sensible action as a bystander.

o *Parents*

Parents are obliged to:

- support the school in its efforts to prevent and address incidents of bullying including cyber bullying and identity-based bullying.
- discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with their child.

- watch out for signs and symptoms that their child is being bullied or is bullying others.
- follow their instincts if they suspect their child is being bullied.
- instruct their children to tell if they are being bullied or if they have seen other pupils being bullied.
- speak to the Class Teacher if their child is being bullied or they suspect that this is happening.
- speak to the Class Teacher as soon as they are aware that issues are arising which are affecting their child.
- communicate concerns to school staff which may be required in writing.
- encourage positive behaviour and discourage negative behaviour both at home and at school.
- encourage their child to solve difficulties without resorting to aggression.
- encourage their child to share, be kind, caring and understanding towards others.
- never directly approach a pupil or the parent/guardian of a pupil at the school to intervene in behavioural issues.
- be clear that in any situation where disciplinary sanctioned are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, her/his parents/guardians, and the school.
- acknowledge that whilst the school will support parents/guardians and pupils in dealing with issues that arise outside of school, limitations exist to deal fully with issues that arise while the pupil is not under our care.

Education & Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies that will be used in our school (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) are as follows:

- **School Wide Approach**

    o A school wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community
    o The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
    o The fostering and enhancement of self-esteem of all our pupils through curricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
    o Integration of anti-bullying issues into other curricular areas.
    o Integration of LGBT issues across the curriculum, age appropriate/developmentally appropriate.
    o Whole staff professional development on awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it – prevention and intervention.
    o A member of staff will be appointed to attend In-Service, when available on developing supportive structures for pupils affected by bullying.

- o Professional development with specific focus on the training of relevant teacher(s).
- o Raising school awareness and providing training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parents/guardians and the wider school community.
- o 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 pupil use of communication technology within the school.
- o Involvement of the Pupil Council in contributing to a safe school environment, e.g. buddy system, mentoring, lunchtime pals and other pupil support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- o Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school – to be included in pupils journals and displayed publicly in classrooms and common areas within the school.
- o The school's Anti-Bullying Policy is discussed with pupils and a copy is available to all parents/guardians on request from the school office. A copy is posted on the school's website.
- o The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures, e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school on the promotion of friendship, bullying prevention, annual Friendship Week, parent/guardian seminars organised by Parents' Committee, pupil surveys, regular assemblies, etc.
- o 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.
- o Methods that can be used to encourage pupils to tell, e.g.
  - ▪ Direct approach to teacher (at an appropriate time)
  - ▪ Hand note up with homework
  - ▪ Make a phone call to the school office
  - ▪ Worry box in classrooms and public area adjacent to Pupil Council Box.
  - ▪ Ask a parent/guardian or friend to tell on your behalf
- o Identify clear protocols to encourage parents/guardians to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.

- **Implementation of Curricula**

The formal curriculum of the school will be used to educate pupils against bullying behaviour.

- o The full implementation of the SPHE and CSPE curricula and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes
- o Professional development for staff when available in delivering these programmes.

- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme etc.
- A list of resources available related to SPHE curriculum is available in the SPHE press.
- Delivery of the SPHE Programmes at Primary and Post-Primary levels.
- The school will implement the advice in 'Sexual Orientation advice for Schools' (RSE Primary).

- Circle time
- Drama / role play
- Posters
- Films
- Visiting speakers / workshops - opportunities to be provided for pupils to receive a talk/workshop on bullying, in particular cyber bullying, as it is constantly evolving.
- Workshops at age and ability appropriate levels.
- Assemblies with a focus on anti-bullying
- Specific intervention in classes where we know or suspect bullying has occurred
- Parent Talks
- Individualised intervention programmes for vulnerable pupils such as 'The Incredible Five Point Scale'
- Talks by visiting Gardaí

The following programmes are/will be used by teachers in the school:

- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Grow In Love Programme
- National Anti-Bullying website
- CAWT Programme

A range of tools can be used with pupils to educate them about bullying including cyber bullying and identity based bullying. These include:

- Posters and displays.
- Films or DVDs.
- Anti-bullying songs.
- Anti-bullying behaviour contract signed by all class members at the start of the school year.
- Drama productions about bullying or difference.
- Visiting Speakers / workshops.
- PowerPoint presentations.
- Online activities including researching topics and producing information for their school.
- Assemblies.

Procedures for noting and reporting an incident of bullying behaviour

- Pupils are encouraged to report bullying behaviour, no matter how trivial it seems, as soon as possible.
- All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, should be recorded within the class behaviour log, and be investigated by the relevant teacher(s).
- Any pupil or parent/guardian may bring a bullying incident to the attention of any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports, of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Special Needs Assistants and all non-teaching staff will report any incident of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them to the relevant teacher.
- Incidents of bullying which occur on School Transport Services must be recorded by the Bus Escort in the Incident Book provided to the Escort. The report must be given to the Deputy Principal who will inform the relevant teacher(s).

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying Behaviour

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 teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- When investigating and dealing with bullying the school will respond to the situation in an age appropriate manner, bearing in mind the child's understanding of right and wrong.
- Parents/Guardians will be informed by the Principal/Deputy Principal/In-School Management Team member of incidents of bullying so that they are given the opportunity to discuss the matter.
- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation to assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- Incidents should be investigated discreetly and all interviews will be conducted with sensitivity (usually outside the classroom or in a discreet area within the classroom) to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned.
- The relevant teacher will 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 as soon after the incident as is possible.
- Pupils who were not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way and will be expected to assist the investigation. Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders if they remain passive where bullying is concerned – all bystanders must report bullying.

- If a group is involved, it is normal practice to interview each member 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.
- If appropriate, those involved will write down their account of the incident.
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent/guardian 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/guardians an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the action being taken by the school.
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to her/him how s/he is in breach of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and efforts should be made to try to get her/him to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- Serious cases of bullying behaviour must be recorded in the Serious Incident Book and are referred to the Principal/Deputy Principal/In School Management Team.
- In cases where it has been determined that bullying has occurred, the Principal will meet separately parents/guardians of the two parties involved as appropriate, in the presence of another teacher. The Principal will outline the results of the investigation, give an explanation of the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy. A discussion of ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions taken by the school should take place.
- The Code of Behaviour is invoked in circumstances where it is deemed prudent by the relevant teacher and School Principal.
- The situation will continue to be monitored to ensure that the problem has been resolved.
- Pupils will be supervised and escorted to bus / yard if required.
- In any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this matter is private to the pupil being disciplined, his/her parents and the school.
- It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not telling tales but are being responsible and will be taken seriously.
- In the case of a complaint involving a staff member, this should be raised with the Principal.

o **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:
    - o Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
    - o Whether any issues between the parties has been resolved as far as is practicable;
    - o Whether the relationship between the parties has been restored as far as is practicable;

- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents/guardians or the Principal/Deputy Principal/In-School Management Team member.
- Follow-up meeting(s) will be arranged separately with the two parties involved, with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the victim is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.
- 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 Parental Complaints Policy.
- 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.
- As part of the school's ongoing self-evaluation, records will be reviewed and analysed.

In the case where a member of staff is alleged to have bullied a pupil, the Principal will investigate the matter and take appropriate action.

In the case where a pupil is alleged to have bullied a staff member, the Principal will investigate the matter and take appropriate action.

If the alleged incident involves the Principal or Deputy Principal, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will investigate the matter and take appropriate action.

Recording of Bullying Behaviour

All staff must keep a written record of any significant incident witnessed by them or notified to them.

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**

  - Cases of bullying behaviour will be factually recorded in the relevant Class Anti-Bullying Record Book on Appendix 2 – Behaviour Tracker.
  - All reports of bullying must be investigated. The relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
  - Staff should keep a written record of their discussions with those involved. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to record their account of the incident.

- **Formal Stage 1 – determination that bullying has occurred**

  - If it is established by the Class 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 practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

- These records will be kept in the Anti-Bullying Record Book which is retained by each Class Teacher in a secure place – locked drawer of teacher's desk or in a locked press.
- At the end of the school year all records will be collected and retained in the school office, accessed through the School Secretary.

  o **Formal Stage 2 – Appendix 3 (DES Procedures)**

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- 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 has occurred.
- Serious incidents or recurring incidents of bullying behaviour which have, in the opinion of a teacher, not been resolved within 20 school days will be recorded on the DES template and shall be reported to the Principal.
- The teacher will also use the DES recording template where he/she considers the bullying behaviour to constitute serious misconduct.
- Where cases of cyber bullying are reported, these will be recorded.
- If a case remains unresolved the matter will be referred to the school's Board of Management. The Board will also be briefed in relation to the number, if any, of templates which have been completed.
- When Appendix 3 is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy given to the Principal. These records will be retained in the school office filing cabinet until the pupil leaves the school. Then these records will be placed with all other pupils' records in the school.

Established intervention strategies

- Teacher holds interviews with all pupils concerned
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process.
- Working with parents/guardians to support school interventions
- No blame approach
- Circle time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing

The procedures mention the following intervention strategies and reference Ken Rigby:

www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/BullyingPreventionStrategiesinSchools KenRigby.pdf

- The traditional disciplinary approach
- Strengthen the victim / teach specific strategies to pupils
- Mediation
- Restorative Practice
- The Support Group Method

- The Method of Shared Concern.

Indications / Effects of Bullying

Persons who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity and extreme anxiety resulting in greater vulnerability. Self-confidence may be damaged with a consequent lowering of their self-esteem. While they may not talk about what is happening to them, their suffering is indicated through changes in mood and behaviour. The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

Physical indicators	- Unexplained bruising, cuts, etc. - Loss of or damage to personal property - Hunger or thirst - Frequent minor illnesses, headaches, tummy upsets - Bed wetting - Loss of appetite - Obsessive behaviour - Expressed unhappiness at physical appearance or weight - Stammering - Requests for extra money - Reluctance to go to the yard
Emotional and psychological behaviours	- Outbursts of anger, temper or irritability at home - Bullying brothers or sisters, or parents - Noted behaviour changes, e.g. when a well behaved child suddenly becomes troublesome **Signs of depression** - Changes in mood, appetite, sleep patterns - Tiredness, neglect of appearance - Expressions of sadness, worthlessness - Nightmares, crying at night - Restless or disruptive behaviour - Cynicism or black mood - Implied or overt threats of self-harming
School related indicators	- Reluctance to go to school or wanting to be accompanied - Returning in bad form - Changing route - Avoiding certain days or lessons - Nervousness in class - Punctuality problems - Poor concentration - Deterioration in school work - Expressions of hopelessness - Reluctance to take part in activities - Fewer invitations to participate in outside of school activities - Abusive phone calls, texts or emails

Countering Bullying

St. Michael's School:

- Acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to a secure environment. The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
- Disapproves of vulgar, offensive, sectarian, gender discrimination or other aggressive behaviour – cyber-bullying by any of its members
- Has a clear commitment to promoting equality in general and gender equality, equality of sexual identity
- Has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs
- Identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupil's attitudes and values
- Acknowledges that all our pupils would be considered vulnerable. Particular care of 'at risk' pupils is taken and a monitoring system is used to provide early intervention when/if necessary and responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner
- Recognises the need to co-operate with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships within the school community
- Recognises the responsibilities of parents to share in the task of equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills
- Recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying
- Promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in group and community
- Promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school
- Shares a collective responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school.

Dealing with Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying refers to bullying carried out using the internet, mobile phones or other technological devices. Communication technologies have become widespread and an integral part of young people's lives. As a result, cyber bullying can happen at any time and any place.

Pupils should:

- ignore the bully – save the evidence and show a trusted adult.
- keep the message, note date and times and show to a trusted adult.
- block the sender; if the harassment is coming in the form of instant messages, texts or profile comments, use preferences or privacy tools to block the person, if it's in chat, leave the 'room', or contact your internet service provider.
- if on a webpage or social network, report the abusive message(s) to the site provider.
- above all – tell someone what is going on, you don't have to cope with it alone.

Where incidents of cyber bullying occur, they will be immediately recorded on Appendix 3 and procedure followed accordingly.

Support

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

- 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.
  - Pastoral care system
  - Group work such as Circle time
- If pupils require counselling and/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.

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.

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.

Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- S.P.H.E. / R.S.E. / Well-being Plans
- Code of Behaviour
- Safety Statement / Health, Safety & Welfare Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement & Risk Assessment
- Acceptable Use Policy – ICT
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Religion Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

It is the role of the Principal / Deputy Principal / Post Holders to revise and amend this policy annually or as the need arises.

Communication

A copy of this policy in draft form was given to all staff members for discussion on 12th March 2014 and reviewed annually since. Updated copies are placed in Policy Folders throughout the school and on Aladdin, accessible to all staff. It is available to parents from the school office and on the school website www.stmichaelsholyangels.com.

Ratification

This policy is reviewed once in every school year using the Annual Review Checklist (Appendix 4). Written notification that the review has been completed is made available to school personnel and published on the school website. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Patron and the Department.

Signed: _Sr. Bernadette Cannon_
Chairperson
Board of Management

Sharon Gorevan
Principal

Date: _24. 04. 2024_

APPENDIX 1 - Advice for Parents/Guardians

Effects of Bullying

Bullying can affect pupils in many different ways. When pupils are bullied, their lives may be made miserable. They may be unhappy about coming to school. They may lose self-confidence and self-esteem, blaming themselves for the bullying. Some children may experience stressful symptoms such as stomach aches and head aches, nightmares or panic attacks. (This form of unhappiness is likely to affect their concentration and learning). If unchallenged other pupils can learn that bullying is a quick and effective way of getting what they want.

Indications of Bullying Behaviour – Signs and Symptoms

The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school on School Transport Services – requesting parents to drive or collect them.
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, mitching.
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.
- Pattern of physical illnesses, e.g. head aches, stomach aches.
- Unexplained changes in either mood or behaviour. It may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress – stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting.
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers.
- Possessions missing or damaged.
- Increased requests for money or stealing money.
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing.
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

Those signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. If repeated or occurring in combination, these signs warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the child.

What to do if your child is being bullied:

- Discuss the experience with your child to find out the precise details of what has happened.
- Reassure him/her that you and the school will help him/her.
- Discuss with him/her what to do next – he/she may be able to suggest strategies for dealing with it.
- Encourage him/her to tell school staff.
- Contact the school as soon as possible.
- Follow up to ensure that the matter is dealt with and resolved.
- Parents must never attempt to resolve the alleged bullying directly with the bully.

What to tell your child to do if someone they know is being bullied

- Tell a member of the school staff (privately if necessary).
- Tell his/her parents – they will contact the school.
- Talk to the person who is being bullied – you may be able to help her/him.
- Reject bullying behaviour among your friends – tell them that it is wrong to bully.
- Help the bullied person to get away from the situation.
- Know and follow the school Code of Behaviour.

What to tell your child if he/she is being bullied

- Tell the teacher/staff member immediately.
- Help the teacher to investigate it.
- Tell the bully to stop.
- Tell your parents when you get home.
- Tell a friend about what is happening.

Advice to Prevent Bullying

- Talk about bullying at home and seek to ensure that your son/daughter understands that it is wrong to bully or to be seen to support the bullying of another person. It is very important that parents/guardians let their son/daughter know that he/she can go to them for support if he/she is being bullied.
- Explore some of the reasons why someone may bully others. Build empathy in your son/daughter, it has a key role to play in the prevention of bullying.
- Support your child in the development of strong friendships which will make him/her less vulnerable to bullying and rejection.
- Limit and monitor the time that your child spends online.
- Encourage your son/daughter to participate in activities, sporting or otherwise, that have the capacity to provide opportunities for personal achievement, confidence building and the promotion of self-esteem and self-discipline.
- Be aware of your child's internet and mobile phone use so that you will recognise if he/she is the subject of, or is involved in cyber bullying.
- Parents can play a huge role in preventing cyber bullying. It is important that parents/guardians emphasise the importance of online responsibilities to their son/daughter and explain that appropriate online behaviour is the same as appropriate behaviour in the 'real world'.
- Familiarise yourself with online chat lingo.
- Teach your children to be respectful and responsible online. Children should be made aware of the consequences of cyber bullying for all involved and to stop and think before they post online or send texts that may be deemed abusive or threatening. Explain that the things they do on their social media devices can have long-term consequences both legal and psychological.

APPENDIX 2 – Behaviour Tracker

Class Teacher: _____

Class: _____

Pupil's Initials	Date of Behaviour	Description of Incident	Action taken (persons involved / date / parents informed)

Appendix 3 - **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	

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

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern:_____
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)	

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date:_____
Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____
* Note: The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.

Appendix 4 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 *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?	Yes
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	Yes
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?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	Yes
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	Yes
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	Yes
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	Yes
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	Yes
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?	Yes
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	No
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	No
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	No
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?	Yes
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	No
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	N/A

Signed _Sr. Bernadette Cannon_ Date _24·04·2024_
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _Sharon Grennan_ Date _24/04/24_
Principal

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

To: All Stakeholders

The Board of Management of St. Michael's School wishes to inform you that:

o The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of __24|04|24__ [date].

o 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 _S. Bernadette Carran_ Date 24.04.2024
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _Sharon Gorevan_ Date 24|04|24
Principal