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ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

MAYO ABBEY NS

Mayo Abbey N.S. - Anti-Bullying Policy

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 Mayo Abbey N.S. 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) 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;
- See **Appendix 2: "Practical Tips for Building a School Culture and Climate"**

The key elements of a positive school culture and climate include the following:

- 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 school-wide 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.

(b) Effective leadership

(c) A school-wide approach

(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

Examples of bullying behaviours (non exhaustive)

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

- 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. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy on enrolment and thereafter as is it updated, as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
 - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
 - Hand note up with homework.
 - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
 - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
 - Administer a confidential questionnaire once a term to all pupils.
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- We have identified clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. (**Appendix 1 "Making a Complaint"**)
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
- The following supports are available and accessed by the school:
 - National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
 - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
 - CÚRAM Family Support
 - Mayo Education Centre

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, Walk Tall Programme.
- School wide delivery of lessons on **Relational aggression, Cyber Bullying, Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying, Diversity and Interculturalism**. The following SPHE curriculum resources are available to deliver school wide lessons on the above:
 - Walk Tall Programme
 - Stay Safe Programme
 - Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme
 - Alive O Programme
 - Be Safe Programme
 - Zippy's Friends
 - Circle Time
 - RSE programme (5th and 6th Classes)

- 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. These will be recorded in an incident book which will be stored in the filing cabinet in the Staff Room. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher
- While 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.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (See Section 6.8.16 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.
 - Pastoral care system
 - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
 - Group work such as circle time
- If pupils require counselling of 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.

In addition the following are in place:

- There are agreed appropriate monitoring and supervision practices in the school.
- Bullying danger spots have been identified
- Support measures to counteract bullying behaviour such as Programmes mentioned in this policy.
- Senior pupils will be involved in the Buddy System as a resource to assist in counteracting bullying.
- The Acceptable Use Policy in our school addresses the following issues:
 - All Internet sessions are supervised by a teacher.
 - The school regularly monitor pupils' Internet usage.
 - Pupils been instructed to use only approved class accounts for email purposes and to use these only under teacher supervision.
 - Pupils been instructed to access only those chat rooms, discussion forums and messaging or other electronic communication fora that have been approved by the school.
 - The Schools Broadband Programme has blocked all social networking sites on the basis that they waste time and take up too much of the bandwidth which is been provided for educational purposes only.

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.

MAKING A COMPLAINT

Our school wants all children to do well and be happy. We recognize that you as a parent/guardian play an important part in making this happen. Therefore, we aim to provide as many opportunities to keep you informed and involved in your child's progress as we possibly can. Regular reports and visits all help the process. Questions and concerns are usually dealt with quickly and helpfully.

However, we recognize there are times when things go wrong, when concerns continue and differences of opinion develop these can be resolved by speaking to the right person. Most concerns can be settled without too much trouble, but whatever the issue, even where you are seriously concerned about your child's future at the school, it is always important to try to find an answer. Disruption to a child's education would be the most damaging result of all.

1. What to do first

Take a few minutes to read this leaflet.
Then, think the complaint through.

2. What actually happened?

Remember there is often more than one view about an incident or situation. For example, your child may well be telling the truth but it may not be the whole story.

3. What do you want to complain about?

What do you hope will happen as a result of your complaint? It might help to talk this through with a friend or relative.

When you make a complaint, remember that although you want to change a situation, you want it to end on a positive note with no bad feelings. In order to do this you should try to follow the procedures carefully and always try not to put yourself or anyone else into a corner.

4. What to do next

When you are clear in your own mind as to what you believe has happened, you then need to speak to someone at school.

Contact the Principal to arrange such a meeting.

Although some schools can arrange to see parents who just "pop in", this is not generally possible. It is always best to try to make an appointment where you can sit and talk things through calmly and without interruption. Investigation complaints does take time and the answers are not always readily available, but you will at least be able to decide whether the action taken (Or not taken) was reasonable and whether any further steps taken by the teacher would solve the problem.

5. If you are still unhappy

In most cases the problem will have been solved by this stage.

However, if you are still unhappy, than you should contact the Chairperson of the Board of Management. The school will tell you how to make contact with this person who may help to resolve the problem informally. Once again, you will have the opportunity to talk through your concerns with an independent party who is there to listen and to discuss what is being said.

If, after this, you are still not satisfied with the answer, then you should ask to make a formal complaint to the Board of Management.

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 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 <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	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?	No

Signed Rose Burt
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 8/10/24

Signed Michelle Tushy
Principal

Date 8/10/24