

Moyle Park College Anti-Bullying Policy

(Revised 2013/14 in accordance with *Anti-Bullying procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools*)

- 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 Moyle Park College has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the college's overall code of behaviour. This policy 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 on occasion, staff members and is therefore fully committed to the following principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:**

We will foster 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;
- promotes effective leadership;
- promotes a school-wide approach;
- a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- implements education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; explicitly addresses the issues of cyber-bullying including in particular, homophobic and trans-phobic bullying;
- promotes effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- encourages the provision of supports for staff;
- fosters consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- the 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 above 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 Travelling community and bullying those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour may not fall within the definition of bullying and may be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the code of behaviour.

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

It is accepted that the above list does not constitute an exhaustive list as it is acknowledged that bullying can take many forms.

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

- The Subject Teacher
- The Supervising Teacher
- The Form Tutor
- The Year Head
- The Deputy Principal
- The Principal

The level of involvement of any of the above will depend on the nature of the incident(s) under investigation.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic bullying and trans-phobic bullying) that will be used are as follows:

- Our curricular and extra-curricular programmes will attempt to engender in all pupils, irrespective of ability, a sense of self-worth.
- Posters and notices highlighting the need for the inclusion of all pupils, irrespective of ethnic origin, sexual orientation or religious backgrounds, will be placed in prominent locations in the college.
- The SPHE, CSPE and RE programmes will highlight for pupils the negative impact of bullying behaviour on victims. This will also be done in other areas of the curriculum where possible.
- Pupils will be educated during IT classes on how to stay safe on-line and how to report any instances of cyber-bullying.
- The school community will stage an anti-bullying awareness week on an annual basis – usually at the early stages of the academic year.
- Students will be actively encouraged to tell if they are being bullied or if they know of any bullying taking place.
- Students will be made aware of the standard form that is used for reporting incidents of bullying.

- The effective supervision of pupils during breaks will endeavour to keep pupils away from secluded areas of the building and campus.

6. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the college for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

While recognising that no one intervention works in all situations the relevant teacher or teachers may use any or all of the following procedures-

- Any reported allegation of bullying will be investigated.
- The relevant teacher will use the designated form for recording an incident of bullying.
- Other pupils will be interviewed where necessary to arrive at the truth.
- Parents of both the alleged victim and perpetrator will be contacted and made aware of the situation.
- The initial investigation will focus on establishing basic relevant facts such as who, when, where.
- All concerned will be asked to provide written statements during the investigation.
- If it is established that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour an attempt will be made to get him to understand the feelings of the victim and the impact the bullying behaviour has had on him.
- Where required a meeting of all relevant staff will be convened to discuss how best to support the victim and to deal with the allegation of bullying.
- It will be made clear to everyone involved (each set of pupils and parents) that any decision to impose a sanction will be a private matter between the student involved and his parents – in very serious instances of bullying the matter may be referred to the Board of Management under the suspension and expulsion policy.
- When the appropriate time has been arrived at an attempt will be made to bring both parties together with a view to restoring good relations.
- Where deemed appropriate the "no blame" approach or other such strategies may be adopted by the relevant teacher.
- The designated forms for recording incidents of bullying will be filed by the Principal who will make a periodic report on bullying related matters to the Board of Management.

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

- A victim of bullying behaviour will be offered counselling.
- Teachers will monitor the situation to ensure that in as far as possible no further incidents of bullying take place.
- Victims will be reassured that staff are open to offering on-going support if so required.
- An attempt will be made, provided the victim is open to such an approach, to improve the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.

- Those who engage in bullying behaviour will also be offered counselling in addition to facing possible sanctions

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management will endeavour to ensure that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with any bullying behaviour.

9. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the college will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual 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 Travelling community.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on **25th March 2014**.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on our website and provided to the Parents Association. It is available to the Department of Education and Trustees 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 college website and provided to the Parents' Association. It will be available to the Department of Education and Trustees if requested.

Signed: Tommy Flynn

Signed: Maurice Hartigan

(Chairperson Board of Management)

(Principal)

Date: 25/3/14

Date of next review: March 2015