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 Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.

2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- A positive school culture and climate which-
    - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
    - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
    - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- Effective leadership;
- A school-wide approach;
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
    - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
    - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

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, verbal abuse 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.
- unwanted physical contact or use of aggressive body language

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*.

The Anti-Bullying Policy applies to all students while in school and while attending or participating in any activities organised by the school, such as open days, outings, trips or sporting events.

This list of activities is not exhaustive.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

A teacher or staff member who notes or has a bullying incident reported to her/him will refer it to the relevant Tutor and/or Year Head.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, 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*):

STRATEGIES	Did it happen?	Was it effective?
Bullying Prevention & Awareness Raising at assemblies, talks and induction	Y	
School rules will be explained to students eg at assemblies, in classes, at induction etc	Y	
Teachers of SPHE to raise awareness and understanding of bullying (including identity-based bullying and in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying) and its causes and effects	Y	
All teachers to raise awareness and understanding of bullying and its causes and effects	Y	
All staff to promote a school culture based on respect and consideration for all in the school community.	Y	
Subject teachers should use opportunities that arise in their programmes of work to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.	Y	
Prevention and Awareness Raising of cyber-bullying	Y	
The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.	Y	
The Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme at post-primary provides opportunities to explore and discuss areas such as human sexuality and relationships, which has particular relevance to identity-based bullying	Y	
Squashy Couch RSE Programme for TY and 5th Year students	No – programme no longer available	
ECA e.g. sports teams help to promote co-operation and group enterprise	Y	
Staff training as appropriate	Y	
Inform parents as to supports available eg NPCpp, webwise etc	Y	
LGBTI awareness, BeLong and Stand Up to bullying activities	Y	
Module re: Sharing of explicit images on social media (called the 'Lockers' programme)	Y	
SPHE talks	Y	
'Connect with Respect' Garda programme	Y	
Students Council activities eg raising awareness about effects of bullying behaviour, 'being safe on line'etc	Y	
And any other appropriate means		

Following consultations with the staff and students the principal prepares an annual report for the board of management on the effectiveness of the above strategies.

6. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

The Code of Behaviour, the Anti-Bullying Policy and the principles of the Anti-Bullying Charter will inform and guide the disciplinary and pastoral response to incidents of bullying.

1. Any reported incident of alleged bullying will be recorded on the Alleged Bullying Incident Report Form. All such alleged incidents will be investigated and dealt with by teachers. In this way it is hoped that pupils will gain confidence in reporting incidents, and the instilling of such confidence is regarded of vital importance. A teacher who notes or has a bullying incident reported to her/him will refer it to the relevant tutor or year head.

2. Any student may be requested to give a written account of a bullying incident.
3. Parents/Guardians of a victim of bullying and the parents /guardians of those engaged in bullying behaviour may be invited to meet with members of the school staff to discuss the matter.
4. The situation should be reviewed with the relevant parties to ensure that it has been fully resolved.

Students involved in bullying behaviour will be dealt with as follows:

1. They will be warned to stop immediately and may be required to sign an undertaking to stop all such behaviour in the future.
2. Parents/guardians may be informed if a bullying incident occurs and will be informed if bullying behaviour continues after a warning has been issued.
3. In addition to a verbal warning, a student who bullies another student may be liable to sanctions, which include
   * A written warning
   * Detention
   * Suspension

The school may seek advice from NEPS (the National Educational Psychologist Service) and/or the HSE Children and Family Social Services.
4. In very serious cases, a student who engages in bullying may be excluded (expelled) from the school. The school may refer such very serious cases to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardai as appropriate as per the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

Initially pastoral care support measures will be carried out e.g. a tutor or year head may attempt to mediate between the alleged perpetrator and the victim.

If necessary, students who have been bullied or have engaged in bullying behaviour may be advised to make an appointment with the school guidance counsellor, or, if they prefer, with a counsellor outside the school.

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.

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. Adoption of policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on_____.

11. Availability/Communication of policy

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of policy

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. The principal will provide a report on the implementation and effectiveness of education and prevention strategies used in the school. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: Mary Dunne   **Signed:** Mary Meade
      (Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date: 26/03/19   **Date:** 26/03/19

Date of next review: March 2020

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 ignored.
- 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.

Template for recording alleged bullying behaviour (This is a confidential document)

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	

4. Location of incidents

(tick relevant box(es))*

School grounds	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
Other	

5. Name the 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	
Verbal Abuse			

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

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9. Details of actions taken

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10. Any other comment

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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 of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*: 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*?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff is 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?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
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?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
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?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed _____ Date _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date _____
Principal

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

To: Students, Staff, Parents and Parents Association of Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School

The Board of Management of Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School, Ozanam Street, Waterford 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 _____ [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 _____ Date _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date _____
Principal