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Anti-Bullying Policy

1. As is 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 St. Michael's N.S. school has **adopted the following Anti-Bullying Policy** within the framework of the school'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 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

The school community:

- 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.
- acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.

- prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
- 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 pupils' attitudes and values.
- 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.
- recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.
- recognises the role of parents in 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 groups and communities.
- promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
- has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.

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

(e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that:

- build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils

- explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

(g) Supports for staff

(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)

(i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Examples of bullying behaviour

<p>General behaviour 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

	<p>information which you then post online</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Behaviour</p> <p>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>	
Homophobic and Transgender	<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
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

community	
Relational	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying.</p> <p>Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • "Bitching" • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The "look" • Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

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

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- All class teachers
- All support teachers

5. The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:

School-wide approach

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities (Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.)
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.
- 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)s are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour and of the Anti-Bullying Policy of the school on admission to the school, on revision of the policy or on written request. To be cost effective, this will be sent electronically except where there is no internet technology available to parents/guardians.
- Encourage a culture of reporting with a 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, (as opposed to telling tales), they 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.
- ✓ Post a note in the school postbox.
- ✓ Tell their parents/guardians
- ✓ Parents/guardians make an appointment through the school office
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parents/guardians to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- 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.

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the RE & SPHE curriculum and the RSE, Walk Tall and Stay Safe Programmes
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level (These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.)
- Cyber Safety Talk for parents and children organised every two years
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

Links to other policies

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy

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:

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 school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Investigating and dealing with incidents

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible, incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.

- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved, each member may be interviewed individually at first, or may write an account of the incident. If a group meeting is required, each member may be given the opportunity to relate his/her version of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- 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). (From a practical point of view, this may end up being the main way of finding out what happened. The interviewing teacher has had a second adult present when interviewing a pupil, so personnel and teaching will suffer unless incidents are investigated outside school hours.)
- 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:
 - a. Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
 - b. Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable
 - c. Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable
 - d. 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:

1. Informal - pre-determination that bullying has occurred

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. Consideration needs to be given to where the records will be made e.g. incident book. 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.

2. Formal Stage 1- determination that bullying has occurred

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- The school in consultation with the relevant teacher/s should develop a protocol for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher.

3. Formal Stage 2

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 2** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

1. 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 occurred
2. where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy, that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

The school should list types of behaviour that must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal. These should be in line with the school's Code of Behaviour.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained in the pupil's file. Due consideration needs to be given as to where these records are kept, who has access to them, and how long they will be retained. Decisions around record keeping should be noted in this policy.

Established intervention strategies

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- 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 parent(s)/guardian(s)s to support school interventions
- Circle Time
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires

7. 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. Ongoing RE & SPHE lessons.
- If pupils require counselling 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 e.g. National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), child's General Practitioner (GP), & Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).
- 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.

9. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff, or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified, i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ .

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel by email. It is otherwise readily accessible to parents/guardians and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Association . A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education & Skills (DES) and the Patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year (cf. Appendix 2). Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to the school community on request. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Patron and DES. (To be cost effective, the outcome of the review may be published in the PTA Newsletter.)

Signed: *Jennifer O'Leary*
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 07/11/2017

Signed *Miriam Smyth*
(Principal)

Date: 07/11/2017

Date of next review: 07/11/2019

Appendix 1

Addendum to DES Anti-Bullying Policy

Adults

This Anti-Bullying Policy refers to children alone. Nevertheless, experience shows that children copy frequently copy adult behaviour. The combination of forms of bullying among adults in the school community may include parents/guardians, staff, members of BOM and members of PTA.

There are procedures laid down for complaints about staff, whether by parents/guardians, another staff member or by BOM/PTA. There are guidelines as to the duties of BOM/PTA members.

All complaints should be dealt with in a fair and just manner and in accordance with procedures. Therefore, if an adult has a complaint, it should be brought to the correct forum and not be addressed in full or part-hearing of a child/children.

Cyber-bullying

While DES has given due reference to a newer form of bullying, ie. cyber-bullying, it must be remembered that mobile phones and other electronic devices are not permitted in school by the BOM of St Michael's NS.

Resolving cyber-bullying incidents may have to take place when the school-day has ended, as teachers may not always be in a position to put their teaching duties to one side to resolve a matter, which has happened outside school hours. In such an instance, the parents/guardians may need to be present. Two teachers are generally asked to deal with matters where bullying has been alleged.

The above points have been noted by the members of BOM on:

Date: 07/11/2017

Signature of Principal: *Miriam Smyth*

Signature of Chairperson: *Jennifer O'Leary*

Appendix 2

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

4. Location of incidents

Pupil concerned		Playground	
Other Pupil		Classroom	
Parent		Corridor	
Teacher		Toilets	
Other		School Bus	
		Other	

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

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6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (Tick relevant box(es))

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage of 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	Member 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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Signed: _____ **(Relevant Teacher)** **Date:** _____

Appendix 3

Checklist for annual review of the Anti-bullying Policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (BOM) 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

1. 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*?
☐
2. Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?
☐
3. Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?
☐
4. 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?
☐
5. Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?
☐
6. Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?
☐
7. Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented? ☐
8. Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?
☐
9. Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?
☐
10. Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?
☐
11. 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?
☐
12. Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of

bullying incidents? ☐

13. Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation? ☐
14. Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed? ☐
15. 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? ☐
16. Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement? ☐
17. Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement? ☐

Signed _____
(Principal)

Date _____

Signed _____
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date _____

Appendix 4

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the Anti-Bullying Policy

To: _____

The Board of Management (BOM) of

St. Michael's NS, 11 Barrington St., Limerick,

RN: 12834S

wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting on _____.
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department of Education & Skills *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date: _____

Signed: _____

(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: _____

Appendix 5

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.