

MOYDERWELL MERCY PRIMARY SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



Introduction

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 Moyderwell Mercy Primary school (13530D) 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 - September 2013. (Circular 45/13)***

All partners (Staff, Parents, Students, Board of Management) were asked to make submissions during April 2014, including a specially convened Student Council from 5th and 6th Classes.

- The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils. 41% of 9 year olds in Ireland have experience bullying 'in few months before data collection ([Growing up in Ireland Report June 2021 'The Lives of Nine Year Olds Cohort 2008' page 97-104](#)). The school community 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;
- promotes respectful relationships across 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;
- effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;

(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.

What Is 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. It is an abuse of power.**

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, vulnerabilities and those with additional educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful private text message or other private messaging (XBOX/PS), do not fall within the definition of repeated bullying and will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour. In our school, such behaviour is taken seriously and it is pointed out that it violates our daily '*Kind Hands, Kind Feet, Kind Words*' Motto. Sometimes, depending on the severity of the nastiness, the parent is informed and/or Detention in another classroom, for a period of time, is given to the offender. These incidences which come to the attention of the teacher are noted and monitored.

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 ‘once-off’ ‘bullying-type’ behaviours that do not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school’s code of behaviour.

Examples of Bullying Behaviours

<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 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 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

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	<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 community	<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
Relational	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. 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

As detailed in *Section 6.8.3.and Section 6.8.4 in the 2013 DES Anti-Bullying Procedures*, **the relevant teacher for monitoring/restoring** class behaviour is the ***class-teacher***.

Adult supervisors in the yard use restorative questioning when dealing with minor once-off incidences and record negative behaviours in the yard books for school-monitoring purposes.

The **Deputy-Principal (M. Jones)** monitors and records worrying behaviours in the School Behaviour System, which is located on the shared drive. Children are spoken to/warned/given 'thinking time'/detention off the yard, if deemed appropriate.

Investigation of repeated negative behaviour is done by class-teacher, Deputy Principal and Principal. As a repeated incident, the parent is informed. If the behaviour has not ceased with appropriate positive intervention, within a 20-day time-frame, suspension will begin, followed by more restorative discussions and 'retracking/social-skills education, and close monitoring by class-teacher, Deputy Principal and Principal.

The Deputy Principal/Principal will monitor the Anti-Bullying File in the office every 20 school days/once a month. The Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed of the number and nature of Bullying Cases being investigated and interventions pursued.

Education & Prevention Strategies

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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 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. **All classes from 3rd to 6th received specific instruction relating to bullying on 13th and 14th March from a qualified trainer, Gerard Brick. A seminar was also held on the evening of 14th March 2017 for staff and parents, given a comprehensive overview of bullying of all types.** This was provided again by Gerard Brick on November 10th, 11th and 12th 2021.
- 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.
- Development and promotion of an **Anti-Bullying/Keeping Safe Code** for the school-to be displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is **discussed with pupils** and all parent(s)/guardian(s) encouraged to access it on the **web-site or in the school office**.
- The promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention through **Pro- Friendship/Anti-Bullying Week** each year, **parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars/workshop** as mentioned above ; termly **student surveys/questionnaire**; regular school **assemblies by principal**.
- Encourage a **culture of telling**, with particular **emphasis on the importance of bystanders becoming upstanders**. 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 promote 'Acts of Kindness', particularly in Term One as a pro-active strategy in Wellbeing aimed to reduce incidents of bullying.
- Ensuring Mobile phone Policy is adhered to: Switch off his/her mobile phone and place in school bag. (The class teacher must receive a written note from parent in the Homework Journal to advise that their child has a mobile phone in their possession. The school takes no responsibility for theft or loss). The phone is confiscated for one week and kept with the Principal or Deputy Principal, if used in school buildings or school yards. The parent is informed through the use of the homework diary.
- As stated in the School Policy for School Tours/Excursions (January 2017), the above statement is policy, even on daily school outings, except for overnight excursions i.e. The RDS Primary Science Fair in Dublin, where limited access to personal mobile devices is allowed in consultation with Adult Group Leader, and absolutely no internet, Wi-Fi or use of apps which require data is permitted. Where appropriate photographs are taken, these may only be shared privately with the people in the photograph after the excursion, if one so wishes. All downloads (music, videos, games must be age-appropriate, and is the responsibility of the parent to oversee, before the outing takes place).
- Our School Internet Security System does not allow school access to Social Media such as Facebook, Snap Chat etc. Children in our school are too young to access these Social Media Sites but parents/guardians need to be vigilant. In the event of an accusation of bullying among our students through social media sites, outside the school setting, parents will be notified. The Gardaí may need to intervene if the issue becomes too difficult for school personnel to deal with, quickly and positively.
- Internet access in our school is strictly under teacher/SNA supervision only.

Implementation of Curricula

- School wide delivery of lessons on personal safety/resilience, positive relationship, from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme, Relationships and Sexual Education Programme
- The full implementation of the Social, Personal, Health Education (**SPHE**), which involves building up their self-esteem, and helping children to learn to communicate, make decisions and express feelings in an appropriate way:
- The full implementation of Relationships and Sexual Education (**RSE**) to enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the children in our care and to help them to develop healthy friendships and relationships including family, peers, superiors, members of opposite sex, authority figures, fostering an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to human relationships and sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.
- The full implementation of the **Stay Safe Programme**, learning to deal with negative attention including bullying behaviours.
- Cyber Usage in the Senior Classes through the **Be Safe-Be Web-Wise Programme**.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes. Several teachers in school were trained in the **Friends for Life** Programme in 2012/2013, and **Fun Friends** 2013/2014. Incredible Years Retraining took place for all staff in 2016-2017. Cyber Safety Workshops for Students from 3rd to 6th, parents and staff is scheduled for March 13th and 14th 2017.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level as the school requires. These

lessons, delivered by Community Gardaí, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.

- 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.
- Future piloting of following programme may have some benefits

Helping Hands Wellbeing and Anti-bullying Programme

- ✓ Aims to identify early indicators of hidden bullying
- ✓ Use of sociometrists
- ✓ Comes as a software programme : all done online cooperation.ie
- ✓ Cost approx. €4 per child and only takes a few minutes
- ✓ Involves setting up Team of Teachers to oversee/implement
- ✓ Can be used from infants up
- ✓ Children input names of peers they like to work with most, don't mind working with and like to work with least

Links to other policies

- Existing school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to pupil safety are the **Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Supervision of Pupils, Internet Safety Policy, Attendance Policy, School Outings/Excursions, Data Protection**

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

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 are consistent with the following approach.

Every effort is 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 class teacher.

Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus-escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying type behaviours witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the class teacher. The class-teacher records this in their Student Profile/Progress Notes. If there is a repeated 'abuse of power'/'unwanted negative attention as set out in the definition of 'bullying' above, the Deputy-Principal or Principal must be notified through the use of Appendix 1 'Template for Recording Alleged Bullying'. These recorded allegations are stored in the office and progress for reconciliation is monitored. As a repeated incident, the parent is informed. If the behaviour has not ceased with appropriate positive intervention, within a 20-day time-frame, suspension will begin, followed by more restorative discussions and 'retracking/social-skills education, and close monitoring by class-teacher, Deputy Principal and Principal. The Deputy-Principal/Principal will monitor the Anti-Bullying File in the office every 20 school days/once a month. The Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed of the number and nature of Bullying Cases being investigated and interventions pursued.

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of Approach

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the class teacher, Deputy Principal or Principal; 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 (not in the corridor or other public place) 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 should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter,

all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account 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)
- 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 repeated 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.
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Recording of bullying-type behaviours

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:

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. Yard incidences are recorded in the yard books for the Deputy Principal to monitor and these are put on the School Behaviour Monitoring Computer System on the Shared Drive. This is instantly available for all teachers and the Principal to access. Class-Teacher keeps a written observation of incidences observed or reported to him/her in their classroom Student Profile Folder/RingFolder.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant class teacher, the class teacher **must keep a written record** of the reports, the **actions taken** and **any discussions with those involved**. If there is a repeated 'abuse of power'/'unwanted negative attention as set out in the definition of 'bullying' above, the Deputy-Principal or Principal must be notified through the use of Appendix 1 '*Template for Recording Alleged Bullying*'. These recorded allegations are stored in the office and progress for reconciliation is monitored.
- The relevant class-teacher must inform the Principal/Deputy Principal of all incidents being investigated which are repeated acts of relational, unwanted negative behaviour. Unresolved bullying behaviours must be dealt with at Principal level and all records stored in the office. The Board of Management must be informed of the number of Bullying Incidences being investigated, the interventions to date, supports put in place for both parties and the resolution.
- The school in consultation with the relevant teacher/s should keep all written records of reported or actual bullying incidences in the office. The School Behaviour Monitoring Computer System on the Shared Drive will be maintained for 10 years without deletion. (8 primary school years + 1 (possible repeat year), +1 more until child is has one year completed in secondary school.

Established / Embedded 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) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews or discussion

The following intervention strategies referenced by Ken Rigby are;

- The traditional disciplinary approach
- Strengthening the victim
- Mediation
- Restorative Practice
- The Support Group Method
- The Method of Shared Concern

Teachers in Moyderwell have been trained in the **'Incredible Years'** Programme... a positive, pro-active, incentive approach to promoting children's social and emotional competence. (SEE Carolyn Webster-Stratton's Yellow Covered Book). This programme is used throughout the school to promote positive relationships, personal goal-setting and self-esteem. Many teachers are also trained in the **'Friends for Life'** (Senior) and **'Fun Friends'** (Junior) Programmes.

Programme of Support for working with pupils Affected by Bullying:

- 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 through programmes in a tiered approach ...whole school anti-bullying environment, classroom education, by teachers committed to increasing bully-free, positive relational environments, and at the individual level (accused and victim).
- 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.

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.

(See School Supervision Policy ...Part 4 of Code of General Behaviour)

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.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Reviewed: January 2017, February 2019, November 2021

Next Review: 2023/2024

Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

This policy has been made available for consultation to school personnel and published on the school website

Appendix 1 (taken from DES Anti-Bullying Procedures Sept 2013)

Template for Recording Alleged Bullying Behaviour

1. Name of pupil being allegedly bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of alleged bullying concern/report

Pupil Concerned	
Other pupil(s)	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of Incidents Reported

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Halla/Gym	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

(tick relevant box(es))

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	
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	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of Bullying Behaviour and its Impact

9. Details of Actions Taken

P.T.O.

Signed: _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date: _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal: _____