Mount Carmel School 2024-25

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 Mount Carmel 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 staff 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-
  a) is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity.
  b) encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
  c) promotes respectful relationships across the school community-between the following groups of people:
     1. student/student; student/staff; student/parent
     2. staff/student; staff/parent; staff/staff.
     3. parent/staff; parent/student; parent/parent
- 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-
  a) build empathy, respect, and resilience in pupils; and

      b)   explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including 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.

We also acknowledge that adults bully other adults and therefore the Dignity in the Workplace Policy is to be read in conjunction with this 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 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.

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*.

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*):

- Year Head
- Deputy Principal
- Principal

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

- All Junior Cycle year groups are educated through the S.P.H.E. (Social, Personal and Health Education) programme which incorporates anti-bullying information and awareness.
- All Senior Cycle students learn about anti-bullying information and awareness in the morality section of R.S.E
- All Junior Cycle and Transition Year students complete a Digital Citizenship module through their ICT classes.
- New students in First Year attend anti-bullying and friendship workshops (Friends for Life) as part of the Transfer Programme in Term 1, delivered by the Guidance Counsellor.
- Constant promotion of anti-bullying and a culture of welcomeness and respect among students and staff. Also, a strong ethos that is driven by the values from Mary Aikenhead.
- At the incoming first year information evening all students and parents are briefed on anti-bullying and respect for all in Mount Carmel.
- Each year a presentation for example 'Stand Up,' which deals with issues surrounding homophobic and transphobic bullying will be presented to all year groups.
- Positive reinforcement of behaviour for the better good of the community is encouraged through the strategies for positive behaviour system outlined in the Code of Behaviour Policy. Examples include:
- Year Head Rewards
- Positive behaviour entries on VSware.
- Feel Good Friday
- JCSP postcards
- Stars in Journals
- Whole class rewards
- Prizes and Certificates at prizegiving

- Mary Aikenhead Awards
- Effective classroom discipline is seen to be an essential prevention strategy.
- Prefects: there is a link prefect for every First-Year class. Prefects model good behaviour and can assist students in reporting bullying.
- Staff will be watchful and observe relationships between students in class, note absence patterns and let it be known that high standards of behaviour are always expected.
- The school uniform is to be worn at all times as it reduces pressure on students regarding their appearance. It is now an option for students to wear trousers this was organised by the student council and bought in in January 2020.
- Through the curricular and extra-curricular activities students are provided with opportunities to develop a positive self-worth.
- Education re cyberbullying is linked to the Acceptable Use Policy.
- Anti-bullying box/ Problem box is located in all base rooms.
- A sociogram is completed after the end of term 1 for all students.
- Awareness-raising that this is a "telling school". This is promoted by all class teachers, the student council and Year Head assemblies.
- Tutor sessions and Year Head assemblies.
- All staff will be given a copy of this anti-bullying policy, the code of behaviour policy and the dignity at work policy.
- The Student Council are responsible for organising an annual Anti-Bullying Awareness Week. This involves having a different focus on each day of this week, incorporating activities related to the following:
  - ★ racism,
  - ★ identity-based bullying,
  - ★ cyberbullying,
  - ★ a day where all read and discuss the anti-bullying policy (and bring it home to parents),
  - ★ a day where students compile an anti-bullying charter for classrooms
  - ★ a day where the focus is on positive behaviour and rewards as outlined in the Code of Behaviour Policy.
- Assemblies may be held on several of these days, focusing on the relevant theme, subject teachers may incorporate the theme of the day into their classes as appropriate.
- Supervision of all areas at break and lunchtime. Cameras used to check when incidents occur. (In keeping in accordance with the school CCTV policy)
- Digital Awareness Week is run every year in conjunction with Safer Internet Day. Students learn about the importance of being a good Digital Citizen.
- International Language Week
- LGBTQ+ Awareness Week
- Drop box outside the Guidance Councillor's office that is checked regularly to give pupils an opportunity to anonymously get in touch with the Guidance Counsellor or report an incident.
- Very effective pastoral care system led by the class tutor, Year Head's and Guidance Counsellor.

- The school anti-bullying policy is available online for parents, and in the all-staff Microsoft Team.
- All staff will be given a copy of this anti-bullying policy, the code of behaviour policy and the dignity at work policy.
- Enforcement of this policy, including sanctions when appropriate.

NOTE:

The Acceptable Use Policy is seen as forming part of this anti-bullying policy and is part of the Code of Behaviour 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 (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools)*

STEPS FOR REPORTING INCIDENTS OF BULLYING

- The student body are continuously encouraged to report incidents of bullying behaviour to teachers and management.
- Students should discuss any incident of bullying with a teacher or another trusted adult within the school. The school aims to be seen as a 'Telling School'. There is a drop box outside the Guidance Councillors room for students to post anonymously.
- Parents/ guardians should contact the school regarding incidents of bullying behaviour which they might suspect or that they have come to their attention through their children or other parent
- Positive classroom management strategies are used to minimise incidences of bullying in the classroom. If a teacher is aware of any incidents, they report their concerns to the relevant Year Head.
- Any concerns or incidents are to be noted by the teacher or communicated directly to the Year Head.
- The Year Head follows up on the reporting of the incident and investigates the claims. The Year Head can work in conjunction with the Deputy Principal if needed to substantiate or dismiss claims.
- The Year Head and or/Deputy Principal gather evidence and speak to teachers and pupils. Security cameras are checked if needed.
- Sanctions or strategies are put into place by the Year Head to address the bullying and prevent incidents in future. The situation is closely monitored and both parties involved are observed for a period following the claims.
- Interviews with students if necessary: All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity

and with due regard to the rights of all pupils involved.

- If cyberbullying takes place outside school, parents are advised to contact the Gardaí to investigate. If an incident of cyber-bullying affects school activities, normal sanctions are used, and Gardaí are notified.

PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATION, FOLLOW-UP, RECORDING, AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Established intervention Strategies

Investigation

Many different strategies may be employed by the school to investigate and resolve issues of bullying, including the following (please see appendices):

- Sociogram
- Class Observation
- Corridor Observation

Follow-Up

- The Year Head will be kept informed of all incidents and have access to relevant written records.
- The Year Head will monitor progress of students involved in a bullying incident.
- Sanctions may be imposed as necessary (including suspension) as per the Code of Behaviour.

Record-Keeping

- Records will be kept of all incidents by the senior management, records will include details of actions taken and procedures followed. The template in Appendix 3 will be followed.
- The incident is reported to the Board of Management at every meeting as this is a fixed item in the agenda.

Interventions

- A verbal warning will be given to the bully to stop the inappropriate behaviour, pointing out how he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour. Every effort will be made to try to get the offender to see the situation from the other person's point of view. If deemed appropriate, parents may be contacted.
- If the behaviour persists, the parents of the parties involved will be informed (where appropriate.) Thus, they will be given the opportunity of discussing the matter and will be in a position to help and support their children before a crisis occurs. Appropriate sanctions will be imposed.
- Appropriate sanctions will be imposed. The Discipline Approach will be used as outlined in the Code of Behaviour. This involves zero tolerance towards bullying. For students, it also involves using the tiered process: year head, deputy, then principal.
- The following interventions may be also used as appropriate:
  1. Mediation/restorative practice
  2. Inform parents
  3. Referrals to Counsellor
  4. Referrals to the Home School Community Liaison.

7a .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*):

- Care Team meetings which take place on a weekly basis, rotating the year groups every 6 weeks. Attendance includes Principal, Deputy Principal, Home School Community Liaison, Guidance Counsellor, and relevant Year Head.
- Student Support meeting which takes place on a weekly basis, attendance includes the Principal, Deputy Principal, Inclusion Co-Ordinator, Home School Community Liaison and Guidance Counsellor.
- Guidance Counsellor: one-to-one sessions available as necessary, by referral.
- SENCO
- SPHE/ RSE/ ICT Programme
- Year Head/ Tutors / Class Teacher
- Prefect/ Class Captain/Vice
- Referrals to outside agencies as required.
- Principal & Deputy Principal
- SNA Team
- Restorative justice
- Workshops/drama/speakers as necessary
- Senior Management
- Tusla
- NEPS

7b. The school's **programme of support** for teachers affected by bullying is as follows:

- Principal
- Board of Management
- Referrals to outside agencies as required
- Support from colleagues as appropriate (To be read in conjunction with the Dignity in the Workplace policy)

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 **August 26th 2024**

11. 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. 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 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.

Appendix 1

(From Section 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools)

DEFINITION AND TYPES OF BULLYING

2.1 Definition of bullying

2.1.1 In the context of these procedures, bullying is defined as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

2.1.2 The following types of bullying behaviour are included in this non-exhaustive definition:

(i) deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying.

(ii) cyber-bullying; and (iii) 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.

2.1.3 In addition, in the context of these procedures 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.

9 2.1.4 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 this definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour. A single incident can have a serious effect on a pupil and may also constitute harassment which is legally prohibited in schools under equality legislation. Harassment is any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the nine discriminatory grounds (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community). Information on the impact, indicators and other characteristics of bullying behaviour is set out in Sections 3 and 4 of these Procedures.

2.2 Types of bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

Physical aggression: This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

Intimidation: Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying: This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore"(implied or stated); a group ganging up against one 10 person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".

Cyber-bullying: This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chatrooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

Name calling: Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults, or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.

Damage to property: Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, schoolbooks and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen, or hidden.

Extortion: Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

Appendix 2:

(From Appendix 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools)

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 3

Template for recording bullying behaviour 2024-25

1. **Name of person 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 boxes) **4. Location** of incidents (tick boxes)

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

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

_____

6. **Type** of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant types)

Physical aggression		Cyber Bullying	
Damage to property		Intimidation	
Isolation/exclusion		Malicious Group	
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 community	Other (specify)

8. **Brief description of bullying behaviour**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

9. **Action Taken (Verbal warning, Parents contacted, Suspension, Referred to the Board of Management)**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Signature _____

Date: /   /

Staff Member

Signature _____

Date: /   /

Principal/ Deputy Principal

Appendix 4

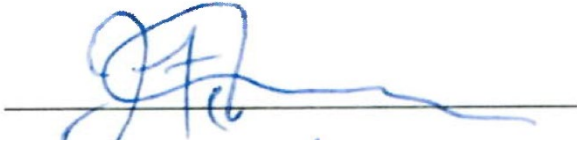## <u>Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation 2024-2025</u>

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.
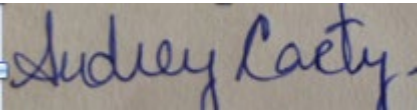
Yes /No

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*?	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 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?	Yes

Signed _____   Date   26/08/2024

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____   Date   26/08/2024

 Principal