Magh Éne College

Anti Bullying Policy & Procedures

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 Magh Éne College has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the college'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 students, and is therefore fully committed to the following **key principles of best practice** in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

Magh Ene College fosters a positive school culture and climate which:

- includes a whole school Restorative approach

- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity

- encourages students 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**

    - Whole school awareness building through co-curricular & extra curricular activities

- **A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact**

    - Our anti bullying policy is 'taught' to our students and their input is valued when reviewing our policy & procedures

- **Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-**

    - build empathy, respect and resilience in students and

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

- **Effective supervision and monitoring of students**

- **Supports for staff**

  - **Whole staff training and upskilling in relation to whole school restorative practices and awareness building for all aspects of bullying**

- **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. Defining 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.

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 will 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 our Code of Behaviour.

Bullying Behaviours

General behaviours which apply to all	- 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, verbal & non-verbal - Insulting or offensive gestures - Invasion of personal space - A combination of any of the types listed.
Cyber	**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 emails - 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 the Equal Status Acts** (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).	
Homophobic and Transgender	- 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	• 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	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include: • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • Intimidation, verbal & non-verbal
Sexual	• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	• Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some students' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some students' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person's disability • Setting others up for ridicule

4. Relevant Person

In Magh Éne College any and all incidents of bullying behaviour will be referred directly to the relevant Year Head notwithstanding this, it is the duty of each adult (both teaching and non-teaching) to promote and ensure the right of each individual to a safe learning and teaching environment. Any teacher may act as the relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it. The Year Head will liaise with Tutors, Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal and Principal as necessary.

5. Education and Prevention Strategies

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:

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 continued development of a safe school environment
- The promotion and development of a whole school culture of restorative practice
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our students through both curricular and extracurricular activities
- Continue to have acceptance, tolerance, empathy & respect as underpinning key principles for Magh Éne College
- Whole staff CPD on a whole school / community approach
- 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.
- ICT: Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school
- Involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Mentoring Programme
- The majority of teachers are trained in Restorative Practices.
- Development and promotion of our Anti-Bullying Policy & Procedures for the school to be included in student journals and displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school
- The development of a 'safe' and 'telling' school environment
- The displaying of LGBT+ posters on corridor notice boards.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with students and parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders
- Ensuring that students know who to tell and how to tell
  Eg. Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - Hand note up with homework.
  - Ask a parent(s)/guardian(s) to tell on your behalf.
  - Ask a friend/peer to tell on your behalf.
  - Year Heads / Tutors administer a confidential questionnaire.
  - Ensure bystanders understand **the importance of telling** if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) 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, as is the students' use of mobile phones
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school.

Implementation of curricula
- The full implementation of the SPHE, CSPE curricula and the RSE Programme
- Continuous Professional Development for staff
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying
- Delivery of the FUSE anti-bullying and online safety programme.
- The college will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN students with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all students to respond appropriately.

Links to other policies
- List school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying, e.g. Code of Behaviour, Child Protections policy, Supervision of students, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance, Sporting activities.

6. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

The college'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 college's procedures must be consistent with the following approach.
Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved 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 Year Head / DP or Principal
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as our secretary, SNAs, bus escorts, caretaker, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant Year Head

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the Year Head will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved

- Magh Éne College is a Restorative Practice school and will investigate and deal with all incidents accordingly, based on empathy and instilling a sense of personal responsibility. A Restorative / No Blame Approach will be the initial method used in dealing with all incidents. This non punitive approach will be conducted in a supportive and sensitive manner
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) and students 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, impartial, unemotional and 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 students concerned. Students who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the Year Head should seek answers to questions of **what, where, when, who and why**. This should be done in a calm open-minded manner, setting a positive example in how to resolve conflict
- 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;
- Parents will be informed should it be deemed appropriate e.g. if the behaviour continues
- Where the Year Head 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 – the development of empathy will be crucial in a non punitive approach
- It must also be made clear to all involved 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 Year Head 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)s or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately
- 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 Students

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:

Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred
- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant Year Head
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant Year Head, s/he must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
- The relevant Year Head must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

Informal-determination that bullying has occurred
- If it is established by the Year Head that bullying has occurred, s/he must keep appropriate and secure 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.
- All records on the college template will be kept in the general administration office for ease of access and confidentiality
- Procedures include oversight arrangements which require that, at least once every school term, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:
  - The overall number of bullying cases reported (Appendix 3 of Anti-bullying procedures) to the Principal or Deputy Principal since the previous report to the Board and
  - Confirmation that all of these cases have been, or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and procedures.

Established intervention strategies
- Teacher interviews with all students
- Negotiating agreements between students and following these up by monitoring progress
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s)s to support school interventions
- No Blame / Restorative Practice approach
- Circle Time
- Tutor Meetings
- Assemblies
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires
- Peer mediation where suitable training has been given
- Development of empathy & resilience
- Due cognisance must also be given to developing both the targets and the young person who is carrying out the bullying behaviour's self esteem

7. Programme of Support

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

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the students affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
    - Pastoral care system
    - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
    - Tutor/Year head system
    - Care team / Student Support Team
    - Guidance Counsellor
    - Group work such as circle time

- If students require counselling of further supports Magh Éne College 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

- Students 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 Students

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 Magh Éne College will, in accordance with it's obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of students or staff or the harassment of students 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 1st November 2021.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and to Co Donegal ETB if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management on a yearly basis. 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 Co Donegal ETB and the Department of Education & Skills.

Signed: _____ .
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 01 / 11 / 21

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: 1 / 11 / 21

Date of next review: November 2022

Anti – Bullying Charter

Every student has the right to enjoy his/her learning and leisure FREE from bullying, both in the school and in the surrounding community

Our school community will NOT tolerate any bullying, even if the unkind actions were not intended to hurt

Students should support each other by reporting ALL instances of bullying.

Bullying will be dealt with SERIOUSLY

We are a Telling School

Bullying is too serious not to report