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Anti-Bullying Policy:

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour Guidelines issued by Tusla, the Board of Management of St. Marnock's N.S. has **adopted the following Anti-Bullying policy** within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013.

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

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

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

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

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

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and

- identity-based bullying such as gender based 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 in our school is **usually the class teacher**. Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

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

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.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of teaching staff
- School wide awareness raising 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 Information Technology for curriculum based activities within the school.
- Involvement of the pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Yard Prefects/ Door Prefects, Paired Buddy system, Infant Buddy system and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of a Friendship Motto, art activities promoting friendship to be developed during Friendship Week – to be displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school's Anti-Bullying Policy is discussed with pupils and the Code of Behaviour of the school is made available to parents/guardians on the school website.
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. annual Friendship Week in October (Friendship Week Resource Pack); annual student surveys; school assemblies.

- Encourage a culture of telling, with 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 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.
 - Senior classes (3rd – 6th classes) may use a 'Chat Box'
 - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
 - Administer an annual student survey (**Appendix 1**).
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Identify clear protocols (**Ask, Listen, Talk, Acknowledge, Get Help – See Appendix 2**) 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.
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school (e.g. Oide, NEPS, TUSLA)

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme.
- St. Marnock's National School participates in the FUSE Anti-Bullying programme. The FUSE Programme is supported by the Department of Education and is referenced in *Cineáltas – Action Plan on Bullying* published by the Department in December 2022. The new Action Plan on Bullying acknowledges the importance of evidence-based, age-appropriate and culturally relevant anti-bullying programme such as FUSE. 4th – 6th classes participate in the FUSE programme and during the 2023 – 2024 school year, our 6th classes will participate in piloting a new research-based 6th class primary school FUSE Anti-Bullying and Online Safety Resource on the theme of Diversity and Inclusion.
- 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/procedures/practices

- The school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying, e.g. Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance, Sporting activities.

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):

6.8.9. 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 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 (usually the class teacher) in the first instance
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), 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: Style of approach (see section 6.8.9)

- 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 (refer to definition of bullying)
- 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 will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.

- Where possible incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- All interviews will 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 will seek answers to questions of **what, where, when, who and why**. This will 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 will be **interviewed individually at first**. Thereafter, all those involved will be **met as a group**. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is **clear about each other's statements**;
- Each member of a group will 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 will 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 will 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 will be made clear to the child how (s)he is in breach of the school's anti-

bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him 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/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.

Recording of bullying behaviour

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 (**Incident Report Form**) of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher (usually the class 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 and a copy of the incident report must be given to the Principal.

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.
- Records will be retained by the relevant teacher on the **Bullying Report Form** and copies will be stored in the pupil files and with the Principal.

Formal Stage 2: Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher must use the **Appendix 3 Recording Template from the DES Procedures** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- a)** 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; and
- b)** 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. Each situation will be dealt with on a case by case basis and the welfare and safety of the pupil will be paramount.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. The teacher will store these templates in the pupil files while the Principal's copy will be placed in a folder in the Principal's office. These records will be retained until the pupil reaches 21 years of age or indefinitely in the case of a child protection issue.

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) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative questioning /interviews /conferencing (Whole school approach)
- Implementing pupil surveys

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (Refer to Section 6.8.16 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

- 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.
 - Pastoral Care system (Team led by Acting Deputy Principal, Shaun Scallan and includes Special Education Needs (SEN) teachers and Principal, Sinéad Trimble)
 - Buddy system
 - Group work such as circle time
 - Social skills development in groups led by SEN teachers
- If pupils require counselling of 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.
- 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 22nd June 2023.

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 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.

Signed: Ciarán McCormack

Signed: Sinéad Trimble

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

(Principal)

Date: 22nd June 2023

Date: 22nd June 2023

Date of next review: June 2024

Name: _____

1. Are you being bullied?

Yes No

2. If the answer is yes give details:

3. Do you know anyone in our school that is being bullied?

Yes No

4. If the answer is yes give details:

Appendix 2: St. Marnock's N.S. Information Leaflet for Parents

Definition of Bullying: *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.*

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.*

(Reference: Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, Department of Education and Skills (DES) September 2013)

Cyberbullying is also addressed within the DES procedures: *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.*

(Reference: Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools (DES, September 2013))

Protocols for parents and guardians:

Parents contribute to and support this Anti-Bullying policy by:

- Encouraging positive behaviour at home and in school.
- Listening to and talking to children as well as praising children for all their achievements and building up self-esteem
- Encouraging children to share, be kind and caring and show understanding to others.
- Watching out for signs and symptoms that their child is being bullied or is bullying others.
- Encouraging children to solve difficulties without resorting to aggression and discussing how you might work together to stop the bullying
- **Communicating concerns to class teacher initially**
- Discussing the Anti - Bullying policy with their children.
- Supporting the school in our efforts to prevent and treat bullying
- Ensuring children are adhering to protocols with regards to mobile phone usage (See Mobile Phone Policy)

What can you as a parents do if you suspect a child is being bullied?

(Steps below outlined in a booklet entitled 'Stop It! Steps to address bullying', Wexford Area Partnership)

Ask: It is often difficult for children to tell, so it is important to ask children about bullying

Listen: Listen to what your child tells you- respond with "I'm really glad you told me that..."

Talk: Talk with the child and let him know that it is right to tell you if there is a problem. Help the child to understand that bullying is wrong and that the victim is never to blame when bullying takes place.

Acknowledge: If the child feels that he is being bullied acknowledge this. Discuss the problem and how it may be resolved. Don't agree to keep it a secret but encourage a proactive response.

Get Help: Identify the areas where the bullying happens. If the bullying is school related, talk to the teachers in the class/area. Explain to the child what is happening. Listen to how the child feels.

Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour (Department of Education and Skills)

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

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

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
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 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 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 _____

Date submitted to Principal: _____