OUR LADY'S SECONDARY SCHOOL

Anti- Bullying Policy

Our Lady's Mission Statement

Our Lady's Secondary School is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School operating under the trusteeship of CEIST according to the traditions of the Sisters of Mercy. We, the staff and students, enjoy working together to realise our full potential in a healthy, safe, stimulating and friendly environment where the atmosphere is one of mutual respect, cooperation and challenge. We take a holistic approach focusing on the wellbeing and development of each individual socially, culturally and academically. Within our school community, each student is treated equally. All are considered uniquely talented, with effort valued as much as excellence. On a day-to-day basis, the Christian message inspires everyone in the school to be charitable, inclusive and understanding.

School Context

Our Lady's Secondary School is a Voluntary Catholic School under the trusteeship of CEIST. The school is Co-Educational and currently has approximately 800 students and over 55 teachers as well as a range of ancillary and support staff. The school has a Board of Management comprised of Trustee Nominees, Teacher Nominees and Parent Nominees. The Board of Management delegates the day-to-day running of the school to the Principal. The school supports the principles of inclusiveness, equality of access and parental choice in relation to enrolment. In supporting these principles it also recognizes the rights of the Trustees CEIST, the Religious and Educational Philosophy of the Sisters of Mercy and the funding and resources available.

Mercy Philosophy of Education

Inspired by the vision of Catherine Mc Auley, Mercy Education is committed to holistic development and to the achievement of the full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalised. It is a process informed and influenced by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ and is conducted in an atmosphere of care, respect and joy. Mercy Education is committed to ongoing whole school development in collaboration and partnership with the Board of Management, Staff, Students, Parents/Guardians and the wider community.

CEIST Core Values

The Core Values of CEIST are:

- Promoting Spiritual & Human Development

- Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning

- Showing Respect for Every Person

- Creating Community

- Being Just and Responsible

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 Our Lady's Secondary School, Castleblayney 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.

Legal Context: This policy is developed with reference to the requirements set out in the following acts:

- The Equal Status Acts 2000-2011
- The Employment equality Acts 1998 – 2008
- The Safety, Health and welfare at Work Act 2005
- The Education (welfare) Act 2000
- Education Act 1998

Cognisant of the guidelines in the following DES documents:

- Guidelines for Countering Bullying Behaviour 1993 Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for schools.
- NEWB 2008 Action Plan on Bullying.
- DES 2013 A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Teachers NEPS (2010b) Wellbeing in Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention. Department of Education and Skills, Department of Health (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.
- 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)
  - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy
  - CPD for staff

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

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

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

- Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying.

- Cyber-bullying.

- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

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

However, 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.

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).

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

Types of Bullying

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

- **Physical aggression**: This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault.

· **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 person; 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, chat-rooms 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, school books and other learning material or interference with a student'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 student may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

-Identity Based: Identity based bullying (specifically including homophobic bullying, transphobic bullying, racist bullying and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.)

The above list is not an exhaustive list of bullying behaviours.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

All members of the school community have an obligation to report incidents of bullying. Students may report an incident of bullying in the following ways:

- Direct approach to a Subject Teacher. Special Needs Assistant. Class Tutor. Year Head. Guidance Counsellors. Chaplain. Deputy Principals. Principal.
- A note from a student or parent/guardian handed to a teacher e.g. with homework
- A phone call by a parent/guardian or student to the Guidance Counsellors Chaplain. Class Tutor. Year Head. Deputy Principals. Principal in the school.

Incidents of bullying behaviour. no matter how trivial. which are drawn to the attention of a teacher. will be dealt with by the relevant member of staff e.g.: Principal. Deputy Principals. Year Head. Guidance Counsellors. Chaplain.

Non-teaching staff e.g. Secretaries. Caretakers. SNA's and Cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them. to the appropriate member of staff.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

5.1 Publicising and Promoting the Anti-Bullying Policy.

5.1.1 All staff share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal to act in preventing bullying and harassment by any member of the school community.

· Provision of guidelines for staff in dealing with reports of bullying.

· A Student Support Committee and Council of Discipline is in place in the school. Their roles include:

o Development of strategies that will help prevent bullying.

o Monitoring of the issue of bullying.

o Awareness-raising around the issue of bullying amongst students, staff and parents.

o Ongoing monitoring, evaluation and review of the Anti-Bullying policy

· Teachers encouraging students to be inclusive in their activities.

· Making staff, students and parents aware of expectations through the inclusion of information around conduct and respect in the School Journal.

· The Anti-Bullying Policy is available on the school website.

· Regular reminders of the Anti-Bullying Policy are given at School Assemblies.

-Identifying support for staff and students involved in programmes and initiatives promoting awareness of the various types of bullying

- Anti-Bullying awareness is covered during tutor class, wellbeing class, and ICT class and across several other subject areas.
- All mobile phones must be switched off in school unless they are being used for educational purposes under the supervision of a teacher and in line with our Internet Acceptable Usage Policy
- All students and parents have to sign the Internet Acceptable Usage Policy
- All social networking sites are blocked on the school computers

5.1.2 Students

- Prominent presence of materials throughout the school highlighting the importance of fostering a warm, inclusive and bullying-free school environment.

- Students are asked to sign the school's Code of Behaviour which promotes respect for self, others and other people's property.

- Staff, students and parents are made aware of expectations through the inclusion of information around conduct and respect in the School Journal.

- The Anti-Bullying Policy is available on the school website.

- Regular reminders of the Anti-Bullying Policy are given at School Assemblies and during tutor class, wellbeing class, ICT class and across other subject areas.

- Provision of support for students by Class Tutors, Guidance Counsellors, Chaplain, Year Heads, Wellbeing Teachers, and Subject Teachers.

- Involvement of students in decision-making processes through development of the Student Leadership and Representative Councils, Student Leaders, Amber Flag Committee and other positions of leadership. Students in leadership roles are vigilant in their monitoring of students' relationships and report unacceptable behaviour to the appropriate authorities.

- All mobile phones must be switched off in school unless they are being used for educational purposes under the supervision of a teacher and in line with our Internet Acceptable Usage Policy
- All students and parents have to sign the Internet Acceptable Usage Policy

5.1.3 Parents/Guardians

· Provision of information about bullying at parents meetings and other suitable opportunities during the academic year.

· Staff, students and parents are made aware of expectations through the inclusion of information around conduct and respect in the School Journal.

· The Anti-Bullying Policy is available on the school website.

· Parents/guardians and the wider community are invited to assist in promoting a consistent message against bullying across home, school and community through their involvement in the formulation of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy

· Parents/guardians are invited to information evenings on issues that have at their core the aim of promoting student wellbeing and healthy development throughout the school year e.g. Open Evenings, Parent-Teacher Meetings, Information Evenings etc.

- All parents have to sign the Internet Acceptable Usage Policy
- Parents through the Parents Association are invited to review and make suggestions during the review procedure.

5.2 Cyber Bullying
Definition:
'Cyber Bullying refers to bullying which is carried out using the internet, mobile phones or other technological devices'. *(Pg.3 A Guide to Cyber Bullying-From the Office for Internet Safety).*
A section on cyber-bullying has been included in this policy as there a number of key differences from traditional bullying that require a difference in approach:
- Cyber bullying can happen at any time and in any place and for many young people, home is no longer a safe haven from bullying;

- Online communication between young people is often hidden from adults. Young people are increasingly communicating in ways that are unknown to adults and free from supervision;

- The anonymity that the Internet affords has particular consequences. In most cases, cyber bullies know their targets, but their targets don't always know the identity of their cyber bullies. This can lead to children and young people being suspicious of, and alienated from, all their peers

- Young people posting messages on the Internet do not feel as responsible for their actions as they might otherwise. They are not immediately confronted with the consequences of their actions and they don't fear being punished for them. The nature of the medium means digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and is almost impossible to delete permanently. Young people may not be aware that the nature of cyber bullying provides for a permanent record of the bullying offence which could impact on them in the future

- Young people are often fearful of reporting incidents, as they fear that adults will take away their mobile phone, computer and/or Internet access.

5.2.1 School Response:

- As part of the whole school approach, the following preventative measures are in place in Our Lady's Secondary School:

- All mobile phones must be powered off and left in Lockers during school hours unless a teacher has asked a student to use their device in class. If a class are using their own devices each student must have signed the mobile phone contract for that class.

- AUP Policy must be signed by students and Parents/Guardians in the School Journal.

- All social network sites are blocked on School computers as per department guidelines.

- In relation to incidents which occur within the school and within school hours, the school's Code of Behaviour will apply as usual. In relation to incidents of cyber-bullying which occur outside the school and outside school hours, the school will engage with such incidents in so far as they impact on life within the school and in accordance with the provisions of the schools Code of Behaviour. Where the school

considers that any such incidents have a wider and more serious consequence, they will be reported to the Gardaí and the school will advise parents of this avenue of approach.

5.3 <u>Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying</u>

5.3.1 <u>Definition:</u>

"Homophobic and transphobic bullying is a specific type of bullying which is targeted at those who are, or who are believed to be, LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender)." (Action Plan on Bullying: Report of the Anti-Bullying Working Group to the Minister for Education and Skills; January 2013)

In line with the general approach of this policy specific prevention strategies to target Homophophic Bullying are as follows:

- Identify key staff for support
- Link with LGBT youth services
- Be sensitive to the needs of students who regard themselves as being transgender.
- Make links with youth groups
- Support LGBT staff
- Tackle anti-LGBT language, incidents and graffiti on school grounds.
- Tackle anti-LGBT incidents in the classroom
- Specific mention of anti-LGBT bullying in the bullying policy

5.4 <u>Inclusion of Anti-Bullying Education in the Curriculum</u>

- Social Personal and Health Education class is timetabled as part of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme. The schools wellbeing programme provides students with opportunities to develop the skills and competencies to care for themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development. The issue of bullying is dealt with in each of the three years of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme.

- Opportunities are taken to educate students on bullying when they arise in other subjects and activities e.g. Wellbeing, Transition Year Programme, Guidance Class, Young Social Innovators Programme, ICT class etc.

- The informal curriculum also provides opportunities to promote awareness of the unacceptable nature of bullying and they have at their core the aim of encouraging the development of responsible and caring attitudes in students and affirming diversity e.g. Sports Clubs, Drama, and Choir etc.

- A mentor system is in place whereby Sixth Year students are paired with First Year Students at the start of the new academic year. Training is provided for Sixth Years on how to be good mentors. This pairing continues for the duration of the students' First Year in secondary school or for as long as it is practicable

- A schedule of visiting speakers to the school with a view to promoting the mental health, relationships, confidence building and wellbeing of all students.

- Regular school events promoting positive relationships and positive mental health.

5.5 Fostering a Positive School Culture and Climate

- Modelling respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.

- Explicitly teaching pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class, online and around the school.

- Displaying key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.

- Catching students being good- notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive affirmation.

- Consistently tackling 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.

- Giving constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.

- Having a system of encouragement and awards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.

- Promoting the appropriate use of social media.

- Actively involving parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.

- Actively promoting the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.

- All staff actively watching out for signs of bullying behaviour.

- Ensuring there is adequate supervision.

- Supporting the establishment and work of the Student Representative and Leadership Councils

6. School Procedures for dealing with bullying behaviour

6.1 Investigating Reported Incidents.

In accordance with our policy, all allegations of bullying will be investigated thoroughly. This is necessary if students are to feel assured that their reporting will achieve results. The investigation of incidents will be conducted by the Year Head and/or the Deputy Principals / Principal. The veracity of the complaint must be established. Separate interviews are advised with both parties and any witnesses. Incidents should be investigated outside the classroom. In the case of group/gang bullying, each member will be interviewed separately, taking a written account of the individual versions. This should be followed by an interview of the group so as to crosscheck the various accounts, if required. An account of all interviews should be kept. An account of the events may be made by the student alleged to be involved in bullying and the victim in writing or notes can be made by the interviewer. The person interviewing will

maintain a log of interventions in relation to bullying situations. All efforts will be made to expedite the investigation, but account must be taken of the complexity of some incidents. In our experience, it may take several days or more to properly reveal the complexity of some entrenched situations.

6.2 Responding to the Incident

Principles underlying our response:

- We work with both the student engaged in bullying behaviour and the student(s) who have/has been victimised separately, establishing for each that the behaviour is unacceptable. It is important for the student who has been victimised that the unacceptable nature of the behaviour is validated and their suffering and hurt acknowledged. It is important also that the student who engages in such behaviour is brought to understand the hurtful nature of that behaviour and the necessity to change it.
- We try to not label either student as a bully or a victim, since this is to reduce the individual to a behaviour or a state. They are more than this. We work with the understanding that each individual has the capacity to change and adapt behaviour to live a freer and fuller life.
- We work on the belief that both the student who has been victimised and the student who has engaged in the bullying behaviour are hurt and have a grievance that needs to be listened to and addressed.
- We believe that both students require help to move on.
- We work to establish a working peace between both parties - to give each the space to lead their separate lives within the school in safety and without fear.
- We work to help both parties to improve their self-esteem so that the student engaged in bullying does not need to bully and the student victimized learns to stand up for themselves.
- We believe that there must be consequences for behaviour which breaks the behaviour code.

6.3 Stages of Response

We take an incremental approach to addressing bullying situations in Our Lady's. Our approach is outlined in 4 stage as follows:

(1) An informal stage where the emphasis is on developing the awareness of all parties of the effects of bullying and an understanding of the dynamics involved.

(2) Restorative Practice. This phase focuses on restoring the relationships between the parties involved with a view to establishing good relations based on mutual respect.

(3) Use of the behaviour code and sanctions: the use of sanctions will be determined by the seriousness of the situation and the response to the interventions at 1 and 2 above.

(4) Referral to the Board of Management. This stage is reached only after the previous interventions have not been successful in addressing a situation, or in rare incidents where the issue is of a degree of seriousness as to warrant this response. (c.f appendix 2 for further information)

Stage 1 - The informal stage: The response strategy is determined by the seriousness of the situation and by the stage in the bullying process at which we have become aware of it. If the process of bullying is identified early enough, a resolution may be arrived at quite easily and quickly. However if the incident is very serious or the pattern is well established by the time it is unearthed or reported, it takes longer to unravel and to move to a resolution.

The Pastoral Approach

In general we take the pastoral approach first, giving the help and understanding to both parties in order to establish peace or to reinstate good relations. Both parties may be seen separately by different members of the Student Support Team and / or Council of Discipline.

Stage 2 towards resolution (Using Restorative Practice)

Our approach in Our Lady's will be based on the Restorative Practice Model which is espoused in our behaviour code. (This model is recommended by the Action Plan on bullying DES 2013, p.87 and the Ombudsman Report p.29) In approaching a resolution we understand that resolution will mean different things in different situations: for some it may be

reconciliation between friends, for others, it may be an agreement to go their separate ways and to tolerate each other. We proceed with the understanding that the student who has been victimised must be consulted on the desired outcome in order to redress the imbalance of power. In general, interventions will only be made with the prior knowledge of the student who has been victimised. However, on occasion it may be necessary for the school authority to intervene unilaterally, if it is judged necessary in the best interests of health and safety and the wellbeing of individuals. Both parties will only be brought together in order to establish an agreement when things have moved on sufficiently and when the student who has been victimised is ready for such a meeting. A follow-up meeting between both parties may be desirable to assess progress. It is important for both to see that the dynamic between them is being monitored. The principles outlined in the Restorative Practice Model are utilised in this stage of the response.

Stage 3. The use of disciplinary measures: Any consequences to be imposed are generally held over until the situation has moved on significantly in terms of resolution. If it is appropriate, the student involved in bullying should be made aware of how he/she has breached the code of discipline and what sanctions are to be enforced. In accordance with the code of discipline, sanctions will be enforced according to the seriousness of the issue. As in the normal course of disciplinary procedures in the school, this is a matter for the Council of Discipline. On occasion, it may be more appropriate to adopt an approach akin to community service where those involved in bullying behaviour undertake a service to the school community – or to individuals - which encourages and promotes a more positive attitude and builds towards greater reconciliation in specific situations. The student victimised should also be apprised of the action to be taken in relation to those who have bullied. In each case the student involved in bullying should acknowledge their role and the hurtful nature of the behaviour and apologise to the victim. The format of this apology may change from situation to situation, but in each case should be witnessed and noted by a member of the Council of Discipline or Senior Management.

Stage 4. Referral to the Board of Management

Should the behavior persist or indeed escalate, or as it becomes clear that the previous interventions have failed to encourage or support a change of behavior on behalf of the students involved in bullying, the situation will be referred to the Board of Management in accordance with the disciplinary procedures outlined in the relevant sections of the School Code of Behaviour.

Involvement of Parents

The school believes that it is essential to involve parents of both the student who bullies and the student victimized. Parents will be contacted by a representative from Senior Management. It is important that parents are made aware of developments so that they can be given an opportunity to discuss the strategies being considered. Parents themselves are encouraged to be proactive in contacting the school with any information their children tell them regarding bullying incidents.

Complaints procedures

Should a parent be unhappy with the response of school personnel to an incident of bullying, they should, in the first instance complain to the principal and if not satisfied with how the complaint is dealt with at that level, to the Board of Management, and if not satisfied with the Board's response a complaint may be forwarded to the Ombudsman for Children ('OCO'). Parents will be informed of this right by the school and of the process for doing so. Procedures for complaint within the school follow the agreed procedures for complaint as outlined in the procedures for Voluntary Secondary Schools, 2000.

6.4 Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

The Board of Management ensures that the school has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour and these must be documented in the school's Anti-Bullying Policy. All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour must adhere to the following:

- While all reports of bullying are investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher and / or Council of Discipline the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgment in relation

to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.

· If it is established by the relevant staff member that bullying has occurred, the relevant staff member must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

· The relevant staff member i.e. a representative from Senior Management/Year Head use the recording template at **Appendix 1** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

> o 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 where the relevant member of staff deems a particular incident or repetition of an incident(s) to be of such a serious nature that it merits the immediate completion of a recording template **(Appendix 1)** and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principals as applicable.

In each of the circumstances above, the recording template at **Appendix 1** must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principals as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at **Appendix 1** does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principals at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

6.5 Referral of serious cases to TUSLA

Children First National Guidance 2017 and the Anti-Bullying Procedures provide that in cases of serious instances of bullying where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, a referral may need to be made to Tusla or An Garda Síochána as appropriate. Where school personnel have concerns about a child arising from alleged bullying behaviour but are not sure whether to report the matter to Tusla, the Designated Liaison Person shall seek advice from Tusla in accordance with the procedures set out in Chapter 5 of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.

7. School Programme for supporting pupils affected by bullying.

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

- The Guidance Counsellors and the Schools External Counsellor are available to support all parties affected by bullying. During this/these session(s), the situation is monitored and students may access support in rebuilding relationships, developing self-esteem, resilience and implementing positive coping strategies.

- In cases where the school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) will be sought.

- Throughout the academic year, opportunities are provided in which students may develop self-esteem, resilience and positive relationships in both the informal and formal curriculum.

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. Publication of policy in the school community.

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.

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 **(see Appendix2)**. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Patron and the Department.

Ratified by the Board of Management on March 28th 2023

Date of next review: March 2024

Chairperson of Board of Management: Gary Carville

Appendix:Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of Pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____   Class _____

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

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es)*   **4. Location of incidents** (tick relevant box(es)*

Pupil Concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

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

6. Type of Bullying behaviour (tick relevant box(es)*

Physical Aggression	
Damage to Property	
Isolation/Exclusion	
Name Calling	

Cyber-bullying	
Intimidation	
Malicious Gossip	
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

9. Details of actions taken

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Signed _____ **(Relevant Teacher)**   **Date**

_____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal

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*Note: the categories listed in the tables 3,4 & 6 are suggested and schools may amend these to suit their own circumstances.

Appendix 4 Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

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
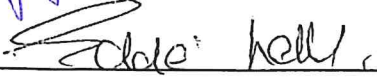
analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

	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 of 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?	N/A
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?	N/A

Signed _____ .   Date: March 28th 2023
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____   Date: March 28th 2023
Principal

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: Our Lady's Secondary School Community (notification sent to staff, students, parents & school patron)

The Board of Management of Our Lady's Secondary School wishes to inform you that:

o The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of March 28th 2023

o This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.*

Signed _____   Date: March 28th 2023
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____   Date: March 28th 2023
Principal