



OUR LADY OF MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures

2024-2025

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. The Board of Management has ultimate responsibility for the code of behaviour and the Principal is responsible for its implementation. The policy is a written document and visuals will be used to roll out the policy to all. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013 and the
2. In addition to the above requirements, this policy and procedures take account of the Education Act 1998, the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act, 2020, the [Children First Act 2015](#), [Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017](#), [the Addendum to Children First \(2019\)](#), the [Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools \(revised 2023\)](#) and the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.
3. In this policy, the following terms have the following meaning:
 - **Parent** refers to parent/parents or legal guardian/guardians.
 - **Staff** refers to teachers, SNAs, examiners, supervisors, secretarial staff, support staff, caretaker, maintenance staff and other adults as inferred by the context.
 - **Everyone** refers to the school community; management, teaching & non-teaching staff, parents/guardians, & students.
 - **Abbreviations:** OLM (Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School), DES (Department of Education & Skills, AB Procedures (Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013), BOM (Board of Management).

Where lists are given they are not intended to be exhaustive, instead they are indicative of the particular behaviour, sanction or item.

4. 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:
 - A positive school culture and climate which-
 - 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;
 - 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 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;
- 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.

SCHOOL STATEMENT

In line with our mission statement and the school ethos, our school community wishes to ensure that everyone can live, work and play in an environment characterised by mutual respect which is totally free from bullying. We want everyone in our school community to feel safe, valued, listened to, and protected. We will not tolerate any form of bullying. We will raise awareness in the school of what bullying is, and that it is an unacceptable form of behaviour at all times. Measures will be put in place as part of our school systems to help prevent the occurrence of bullying, and every effort will be made to address any school-related bullying behaviour which may occur. We will also seek to deal with the negative impact on students within our school of bullying that occurs elsewhere.

MISSION STATEMENT

All of the school community will work with care, to develop mature young adults, who will achieve their full potential, who will be ready to deal with the challenges of the modern world.

SCHOOL ETHOS

The Sisters of Mercy opened their first school in Drimnagh in 1944. A girls' secondary school was established in 1956 and this became co-educational in 1973. The educational philosophy of the school is the full human development of the student in a Christian context.

CORE VALUES

Promoting Spiritual and Human Development

- *We believe knowledge of and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ gives meaning and purpose to our lives.*

Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning

- *We are committed to excellence and to continually improving the quality of teaching and learning.*

Showing Respect for Every Person

- *We respect the unique and intrinsic value of each person.*

Creating Community

- *Our schools are faith communities of welcome and hospitality where Gospel values are lived and where there is special care for those most in need.*

Being Just and Responsible

- *We seek to act justly and responsibly in all our relationships.*

VISION- *Shaping a Brighter Future for Our Young People*

As a voluntary secondary school in the Mercy tradition we hope to achieve the holistic development of each student within the defined ethos of the school. We aim to maximize the potential of each student in our care. This is to be achieved in an atmosphere of respect and fairness. Through support and friendship we hope to affirm each person's self-worth and dignity in the school community. In co-operation with management, parents and staff our wish is that students will grow into happy, confident, responsible young adults.

OBJECTIVES:

- To provide a comprehensive definition of what bullying is.
- To clarify our school's position with regard to bullying in the school context. (see our School Statement)
- To promote an ethos of respect in our school which will encourage everyone to work together to prevent, and to deal effectively with, all reported incidents of bullying behaviour.
- Our approach will be a combination of:
 - Preventative strategies and
 - Procedures and guidelines to report, record, investigate and deal with any incidents of bullying behaviour which may occur.

DEFINITION OF 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 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.

TYPES OF BULLYING:

There are a number of different types of bullying, including but not limited to:

- **Verbal** (eg, cruel teasing, unwelcome nicknames, threats & taunts, non-good-natured slugging).
- **Physical** (anything from repeated minor physical irritations to serious assaults).
- **Cyber-bullying** (via the internet, social networks, mobile phones, etc); Placing any offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum (including public graffiti) will be regarded as bullying behaviour by our school. The placing itself may be a once-off but, because of the context, the offensive item can be viewed and/or repeated by others, so it will be regarded as bullying*
- **Gestures** (including those gestures that most people might find offensive, but also more subtle threatening/dismissive glances and glares).
- **Extortion** (eg, stealing possessions, equipment or money).
- **Relational Bullying** (eg, manipulating friendship or social groups to exclude or isolate a person or ruin their reputation; leaving people out of games & conversations, spreading gossip, rumours or lies; circulating nasty notes or drawings; excluding people from social events).
- **Identity-based** (Gender, Civil status, Family status, Sexual orientation, Religion, Age, Disability, Race, Membership of the Traveller community, eg, a range of negative attitudes, taunting, physical or online targeting of a person based on their identity).
 - **Gender:** this means male, female or transsexual
 - **Civil status:** includes single, married, separated, divorced, widowed people, civil partners and former civil partners
 - **Family status:** this refers to the parent of a person under 18 years or the resident primary carer or parent of a person with a disability
 - **Sexual orientation:** includes gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and heterosexual.
 - **Religion:** means religious belief, background, outlook or none
 - **Age:** this does not apply to a person aged under 16
 - **Disability:** includes people with physical, intellectual, learning, cognitive or emotional disabilities and a range of medical conditions
 - **Race:** includes race, skin colour, nationality or ethnic origin
 - **Membership of the Traveller community.**

Behaviour based on many forms of prejudice is illegal (age, gender, disability, religion, race, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, membership of the traveller community). This school will not tolerate prejudiced behaviour against a person simply because of their being seen as “different” in some way.

SCHOOL STATEMENT ON THE INAPPROPRIATE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA:

The school will do its best to investigate any incidences of cyberbullying, i.e., when students in the school post something about another student or students in the school. This is difficult, as images or posts are often deleted before any investigation starts.

Under The Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act, 2020, it is a criminal offence to distribute, publish or threaten to publish or distribute an intimate image of another person without their consent. If this happens to a student, parents should be advised to report immediately to an Garda Síochána. It is also illegal to possess such images of students as this is classed as Child Pornography.

In OLM we strongly urge parents to monitor their children's phones and social media accounts, especially in relation to Snapchat. We also advise parents to attend our internet safety information session in August.

APPROACH TO BULLYING IN OLM:

- A zero-tolerance approach to bullying behaviour.
- A whole-school model, looking to everyone in the school community to play their part - all alert to the possibility of bullying taking place and raising concerns as needed.
- In dealing with incidents, we will generally seek to adopt a problem-solving approach in the first instance, with the aim of achieving learning and growth and a win-win outcome for all.
- While we look to everyone to contribute, we also maintain a small team with specific training to work with students, parents and staff in the area of prevention and support.
- The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:
 - Each Year Head will serve as the "relevant teacher" for her/his year group.
 - The Pastoral Care team will coordinate and ensure that more general actions are carried out.
 - All staff are expected to complete a Record of Possible Concern form and ensure it is given to the appropriate Year Head.
 - Should confirmed bullying reach the appropriate level under the Code of Behaviour (L4 or above), the Principal/Deputy Principal/Board of Management will become involved.
 - The Principal informs the Board of Management at each Board meeting of how many cases of bullying are ongoing and at which level.
 - Once per term, the Principal provides the Board of Management with a detailed summary of each confirmed case of bullying.
- We work collaboratively with our feeder primary schools to ensure continuity of approach.

PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES:

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 in accordance with Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools and are as follows (The list of strategies contained is not exhaustive):

1. Raising awareness with staff:

- All staff are directed to the anti-bullying policy and procedures which is available on the OneDrive.
- All staff are brought through a step-by-step guide to the anti-bullying procedures in OLM at the start of each academic year. This includes a guide to completing a Record of Possible Concern Form and specific examples of what does not constitute a bullying concern, but rather a Child Protection concern.
- All Year Heads are brought through a step-by-step guide to their role in the anti-bullying

procedures in OLM, i.e., how to investigate and record allegations of bullying.

- The anti-bullying procedures for OLM are published in the staff handbook.
- The pastoral care team in the school includes class teachers and a year head assigned to each year group, the Guidance team, the principal and deputy principal, and the Home School Community Liaison Coordinator.
- Staff are updated on new developments through in-service and regular discussion, as part of our pastoral care system, staff meetings, and other care team meetings.
- Positive classroom management is promoted, which should minimise the opportunity for bullying behaviour to occur during class time.

2. Raising awareness with parents:

- The anti-bullying policy and procedures are published on the school's website.
- The Acceptable Use Policy is published on the school's website.
- The Child Protection Procedures are published on the school's website.
- The Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment are published on the school's website and on public display in the main lobby area of the school.
- The Distance Learning Policy is published on the school's website.
- School Statement on the inappropriate use of social media is published on the school's website and is published in the Information Booklet for parents.
- The school timetables an online safety workshop evening for parents on an annual basis. Presenters include the School Completion Coordinator, an Garda Síochána and the principal.
- Students journal contains a 'Parent Learning Contract' which outlines the role of parents and their expected contribution under the Education Welfare Act 2000.
- Home School Community Liaison Coordinator employed to strengthen links between school and home.
- School Completion Programme Coordinator and project workers engage directly with families of targeted students.

3. Raising awareness with students:

- A positive school culture is created through our Code of Behaviour, which is based on the 3Rs, the most important of which is to be RESPECTFUL. This is taught to students from the first day of 1st year, is visible in every classroom, is in the student journal and is part of the everyday language in OLM. This strategy is an effective practice which allows for the building of respect among students.
- The principal delivers an annual presentation to all year groups outlining the school's anti-bullying policy and procedures. The principal links the anti-bullying policy to the code of behaviour and lists the anti-bullying strategies the school has in place so that students are aware.
- All Junior Cycle students are timetabled for 400 hours of wellbeing:
 - The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.
 - In Civil, Social and Political Education (CSPE), the interdependence of people in communities at local, national and international levels is stressed.
 - In Physical Education, cooperation and group enterprise are promoted through team activities.
 - In Lifeskills (1st Year only), students explore online safety, relationships and friendships.
- All students are timetabled for RSE. The Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme in OLM provides opportunities to explore and discuss areas such as human sexuality and relationships, which has particular relevance to identity-based bullying.
- In the subject of English, a wide range of literature is used to stimulate discussion.
- In Geography and History references to colonisation, exploitation and dictatorships are used to illustrate the negative aspect of power.

- In Religious Education, discussion is stimulated.
- 4. The prevention of bullying strategies in OLM form an integral part of this written anti-bullying policy.**
- Our school is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity. The strategies used to promote this include the following:
 - Displaying the national flags of all staff and students, and our Worldwide Global Schools' (Global Citizenship Education) Wall which depicts a global indicator of the nationalities and mother languages of students and staff.
 - Annual Diversity and Culture Week, which promotes inclusion of all.
 - Annual Active Week, which promotes inclusion of all.
 - Displays regarding sexual orientation and transgender around the school, visibly highlighting inclusivity of the different sexual orientations and gender identities in our school.
 - Annual stand-up week in the school, which includes a number of workshops and guest speakers from advocacy groups which promote inclusion in sexual orientation and gender identity.
 - The school's RSE programme.
 - The school's SPHE programme.
 - Bonding days and end of year school trips for all year groups.
 - Our school promotes respectful relationships across the school community in relation to online behaviour through a number of strategies which include:
 - The Acceptable Use Policy is published on the school's website.
 - The Child Protection Procedures are published on the school's website.
 - The Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment are published on the school's website and on public display in the main lobby area of the school.
 - The Distance Learning Policy.
 - School Statement on the inappropriate use of social media is published on the school's website and is published in the Information Booklet for parents.
 - Posters depicting coco's law in every classroom and office space.
 - As part of induction week in the school, all year groups partake in online safety workshops, delivered by class teachers, year heads, community Gardaí and School Completion project workers.
 - Students develop an online safety charter which is displayed around the school.
 - Principal outlines the definition of cyberbullying and links between the anti-bullying policy and code of behaviour in the annual presentation to all year groups.
 - The school timetables an online safety workshop evening for parents on an annual basis. Presenters include the School Completion Coordinator, an Garda Síochána and the principal.
 - The school's RSE and SPHE programmes.
 - Our school has several measures in place to encourage empathy, respect and resilience in students. They include:
 - Religious education classes.
 - Various liturgical events such as welcoming Mass (new beginnings), Remembrance Service, Christmas, Lent and End of Year Graduation Mass.
 - Catholic schools' week.
 - Celebration of CEIST day.
 - Wellbeing programme at Junior Cycle.
 - RSE programme at Junior and Senior Cycle.
 - Guidance programme at Junior and Senior Cycle.

- Career guidance in senior cycle.
 - OLM is a Jigsaw One Good School Gold standard school.
 - Guidance counsellor in place to help students who may need additional supports.
 - Home School Community Liaison Coordinator employed to strengthen links between school and home.
 - Volunteer Counsellor in school one day per week to meet with students who may need additional support.
 - The School Completion Programme works with targeted students who may need additional support.
- Our school provides students with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth. They include:
 - Extracurricular activities such as sports and music.
 - Various student voice activities such as the student council or the wellbeing committee.
 - After-school study is open to all students of the school.
 - Wellbeing days which class teachers and year heads complete one-to-one check and connects with students.
 - Collapse of timetable days, where students and their parents meet with year heads and class teachers on a one-to-one basis to discuss progress and any concerns they may have.
 - TY mentoring programme trains TY students to mentor 1st year students.
 - Guidance programme at Junior and Senior Cycle.
 - Career guidance in senior cycle.
 - The school's partners include the Trinity Access Programme and KlikIn.
 - Senior cycle female students enrol in NUI Maynooth's Digital Wealth programme for STEM.
 - Annual College Awareness Week.
 - Annual visits to exhibitions such as WorldSkills day (whole school) and Higher Options (6th Year students).
 - All Junior Cycle students are enrolled in the JCSP programme.
 - All students enrol in the TY programme to develop personal and social skills.
 - OLM is a Jigsaw One Good School Gold standard school.
 - Guidance counsellor in place to help students who may need additional supports.
 - Home School Community Liaison Coordinator employed to strengthen links between school and home.
 - Volunteer Counsellor in school one day per week to meet with students who may need additional support.
 - The School Completion Programme works with targeted students who may need additional support.
- Our school cultivates a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central to decrease the likelihood of bullying for students with AEN. They include:
 - The Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment are published on the school's website and on public display in the main lobby area of the school.
 - All lessons are mixed ability except for those subjects that are streamed at Junior Cycle and in the subjects of English, Irish and Maths at Senior Cycle.
 - The whole-school approach to Teaching and Learning includes Differentiation as a strategy.
 - The whole-school approach to Teaching and Learning includes the NCSE's Cooperative Teaching model, this reducing the need for small group extraction from core subjects and therefore not drawing as much attention to those with AEN.
 - The school places equal emphasis on the importance of Leaving Certificate Applied alongside the Leaving Certificate Established course, ensuring insofar as possible that

students are equally treated at senior cycle, regardless of ability or any AEN they may have.

- The school endeavours to integrate students enrolled in its ASD Special Class into mainstream as much as possible.
- Students who enrol in the ASD Special Class are given the same subject options as mainstream students to allow for integration and promote inclusion.
- Students who are enrolled in the ASD Special Class are part of the school community of OLM and are included in whole-school and year events such as trips or celebration days.
- The AEN department and other staff focus on developing social skills of students enrolled in the ASD Special Class to promote self-esteem and inclusion.
- Celebration of annual World Autism Day.
- The school, in the form of the AEN and Guidance Department work closely with the School Completion Programme in terms of transitioning from primary to post-primary school.

PROGRAMME OF SUPPORT:

The school's programme of support for working with students affected by bullying is in accordance with Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools and is as follows (note: the list is not exhaustive):

- OLM recognises that students who have been victims of bullying may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed. In OLM we provide this in the following ways:
 - Wellbeing days which class teachers and year heads complete one-to-one check and connects with students.
 - Collapse of timetable days, where students and their parents meet with year heads and class teachers on a one-to-one basis to discuss progress and any concerns they may have.
 - TY mentoring programme trains TY students to mentor 1st year students.
 - Students are encouraged to become involved in extracurricular activities such as sports and music.
 - Students are encouraged to become involved in student voice activities such as the student council or the wellbeing committee.
 - All students enrol in the TY programme to develop personal and social skills.
 - OLM develops peer mentors through being a Jigsaw One Good School Gold standard school.
 - Guidance counsellor in place to help students who may need additional supports.
 - Home School Community Liaison Coordinator employed to strengthen links between school and home.
 - Volunteer Counsellor in school one day per week to meet with students who may need additional support.
 - The School Completion Programme works with targeted students who may need additional support.
- OLM has a programme of support in place for those students involved in bullying behaviour and are also part of the school's intervention process. We recognise that students involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities are developed to increase feelings of self-worth. It is, therefore, important that the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the student's self-worth. For e.g., students who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.
- Students who observe incidents of bullying behaviour are encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OR SUSPECTED INCIDENTS OF BULLYING:

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 in line with Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post- Primary Schools*) and are as follows:

1. Reporting incidents:

All members of the school community are encouraged to report incidents of bullying that they become aware of in the school context. Concerns or suspicions should also be reported, since our aim is to achieve early-stage recognition of a situation followed by a pro-active response. All such reports will be recorded on our Record of Possible Concern form by the staff member who hears it first. All such reports will be followed up by the Year Head, and there will be a report back in due course to the individual who first raised the issue.

We will seek to develop an ethos in which reporting will be regarded as responsible behaviour rather than "telling tales". However, recognising that this may not always be the case, the school will seek to guard the source of information given to us in relation to a possible bullying.

- **Students** should ideally report to their Year Head or Class Teacher, or whatever staff member they are most comfortable with.
- **Parents** should report incidents or concerns to their child's Year Head. However, they too may report to the staff member that they feel most comfortable with. A parent might first seek the advice of a Parent Representative on the Parents' Council, who would advise and support them with regard to informing the school.

2. Investigating Reported Incidents

All reported incidents of bullying will be investigated. Different levels of response will be used as appropriate to different situations. The starting level will depend on the severity of the alleged incident and the evidence available. The possible levels of response are:

- Level-1 Record using our Record or Possible Concern Form and keep an eye on the situation. Usually relevant others would also be alerted as appropriate to the student (e.g., class teacher, other staff etc.). Possibly also make informal discreet enquiries (e.g., from school staff, non-involved students, etc.) to get a sense of what may be going on.
- Level-2 If the view is taken that bullying behaviour has been occurring, that will raise the issue to level-2. Record using our Bullying-Report-Form. Directly approaching some or all of the parties involved would almost certainly be necessary at this level.
- Level-3 If the issue is not resolved at level-2, then it is raised to level-3. Initiate a formal investigation and/or intervention within the school. Further investigation might include directly interviewing those alleged to be involved and those who may be in a position to have some knowledge of the situation. This might involve collecting formal written statements from a number of students and staff. Record findings on the Form.
- Level-4 If appropriate, inform the Gardaí and turn the investigation over to them.

3. Involvement of parents.

- Level-1 would generally remain within school and would not involve notifying any parents.
- Level-2 would generally remain within school initially. If a student were to be challenged about his/her alleged bullying behaviour following enquiries, then that student's parent would generally be informed.
- Level-3-4 would be in all cases be notified to all the parents concerned.

DEALING WITH CONFIRMED INCIDENTS OF BULLYING IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT:

- Section 6.8.9 of the AB-Procedures gives general direction on procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents. These will be studied closely by our own staff and a Protocol prepared and put on file detailing the approaches which we use. That Protocol will be included in the annual BOM reviews.
- We will do our utmost to ensure the safety of the person being bullied.
- Generally, we will first seek to implement a problem-solving approach based on the principles of Restorative Practice. The focus will be to help the parties involved to change behaviour, with the aim of achieving a win-win outcome for all. Support in the form of counselling may be offered to both parties. Support from outside agencies may also be sought if deemed appropriate to the particular situation. Perpetrators may be asked to sign a “behavioural agreement” as part of the resolution to the bullying situation.
- Possible exceptions to implement a problem-solving approach based on the principles of Restorative Practice would be where:
 1. The incident reported is extreme in nature, or in the case of repeat serious incidents. Examples of reported incidents that are extreme in nature include:
 - Abuse reactive behaviour *
 - Sexually obsessive behaviour *
 - Sexually abusive behaviour *
 - Serious physical assault *
 - Sexual Harassment *
 - Sexual Assault *
 2. One of the parties and/or their parents are unwilling to engage in implementing a problem-solving approach based on the principles of Restorative Justice.

** Any of the above examples of extreme incidences will be reported to the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) under the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, the Addendum to Children First (2019), the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023). They may possibly be reported to an Garda Síochána under the Children First Act 2015, the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012, and/or the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act, 2020.*

- With regard to the perpetrator/s, sanctions will be applied as laid down in the school’s Code of Behaviour. The co-operation of the perpetrator with the school’s effort to achieve a positive outcome for everyone will be taken into account when considering possible sanctions.
- If the perpetrator does not engage positively with the process, we may have to reluctantly conclude that a positive approach is no longer appropriate. In that case the full rigor of the Code of Behaviour will be applied up to and including expulsion. A particularly serious view will be taken if further incidents occur, including “revenge attacks” of any kind by the perpetrator or his/her associates against those who may have helped with the investigation. All concerned will be informed of this.

ROLE OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT:

The Principal’s Report to each BOM meeting will contain a section under Anti-Bullying. Once per term, the principal presents a summary of all confirmed cases of bullying to the BOM at the next available meeting. Under the AB- Procedures published by the DES, the BOM is required to undertake an annual review of our policy and its implementation. The review is based on the checklist in Appendix-4 of the AB-Procedures, and a report from our own the Pastoral Care Team. A formal written notification that the annual BOM review has been completed will be circulated to as required in the AB-Procedures.

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.

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 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.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to parents. 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 on an annual basis. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to parents. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

APPENDICES:

1. Record of Possible Concern form.
2. Bullying Report form.
3. 20-day Record Form.
4. Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

List of school documents and policies that support the Anti Bullying Policy and Procedures:

- Code of Behaviour
- Admissions Policy
- Child Protection Procedures
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Distance Learning Policy
- Attendance Strategy
- Health & Safety Policy Statement
- Guidance Plan
- RSE/SPHE Policy
- HSCL Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy

Signed:



Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 2nd September 2024

Date of next review: September 2025

Signed:



Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 2nd September 2024

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 3: 20-day Record Form

**Bullying Report Form
CONFIDENTIAL**

OLM-Drimnagh Anti-Bullying programme

*To be completed when the view is taken that bullying behaviour has been occurring – our level-2.
Completed and kept by the relevant Year Head*

Name of person making this report:	Date of report:
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Name/s	Pupil/s being bullied	Pupil/s engaged

- Attached Record of Concern form/s relating to the incident/s
(If none such yet written, please complete and attach one now with its tick-box tables)
- Bullying incident report form (Minton derived form)

The date on which I have determined that bullying behaviour has been occurring:

The date on which 20 school days will have elapsed and when I will review:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please file and continue to keep the situation under review.

<p><u>20- day review</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am satisfied that the matters above have been adequately and appropriately addressed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am not so satisfied. <i>Please explain briefly.</i></p> <p>Signature: _____ Date: _____</p>
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The purpose of this form is to record and date the formal assessment by the responsible teacher that bullying behaviour has been occurring, and the follow-on steps required after that.

The idea of using attachments is to avoid the need for re-writing all the details again.

- The tick-box Record-of-Concern form provides the analysis required by the "appendix-3 template"*
- The Stephen Minton derived form is probably better suited to capture the details from the various parties.*

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

The BOM 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.

	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?	Y	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents’ council?	Y	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	Y	
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?	Y	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all students?	Y	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	Y	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	Y	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	Y	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	Y	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	Y	
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?	Y	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school’s handling of bullying incidents?	Y	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school’s handling of a bullying situation?		N
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school’s handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	Y	
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?	Y	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school’s policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?		Y*
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?		Y*

The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting on 2nd September 2024

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:



Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 2nd September 2024

Date of next review: September 2025

Signed:



Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 2nd September 2024