

**MARY QUEEN OF ANGELS 1**



**BALLYFERMOT**

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

Mary Queen of Angels N.S. 1  
Gurteen Road,  
Ballyfermot,  
Dublin 10.

## **Introduction**

This anti-bullying policy operates in conjunction with the Code of Behaviour, which is used to address isolated instances of anti-social behaviour.

The school has a central role in the children's social and moral development just as it does in their academic development. In school, we work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. The individuality of each child needs to be accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of every child to education in a disruption free environment.

Bullying is defined as repeated aggression, whether verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. Examples of bullying include physical aggression, damage to property, intimidation, isolation, name-calling, taunting or 'slagging' and cyber bullying. Child to child bullying, teacher to child, intra staff bullying, parent to staff and parent to child bullying (including a child other than their own) are examples of the areas where bullying may occur.

Isolated instances of aggressive behaviour, which would be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour, would not be described as bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing, it is bullying.

The school acknowledges that there are three parties involved in bullying – those who bully, those who are bullied and those who witness the bullying. Staff and teachers bear this in mind when dealing with bullying incidences and try to support and work with all parties involved.

## **Rationale**

This policy serves to outline the procedures followed in Mary Queen of Angels 1 to address incidents of bullying. As a school we believe that our pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment. 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 Mary Queen of Angels 1 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.

## **Aims of the Policy**

- To foster a school ethos of mutual and self-respect
- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour
- To outline, promote and raise awareness of preventative approaches that can be used in response to reported incidences of bullying

- To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour
- To outline procedures for noting and reporting instances of bullying behaviour
- To outline procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour

### **Examples of Bullying Behaviour**

#### General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying

- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the travelling community)
- Physical aggression
- Damage to property
- Name calling
- Slagging
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
- Offensive graffiti
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Insulting or offensive gestures
- The “look”
- Invasion of personal space
- A combination of any of the types listed.

## Cyber

Where we cannot monitor children's online activity outside of school, we will ensure that when using school devices, incidents of cyber bullying will not be tolerated. Some examples of cyber bullying include:

- Denigration: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation
- Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual
- Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name
- Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight
- Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online
- Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images
- Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group
- Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety
- Silent telephone/mobile phone call
- Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive text messages
- Abusive email
- Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Whatsapp, X, Tik Tok and games consoles
- Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures
- Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

## Identity Based Behaviours

Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the travelling community)

## Homophobic and transgender

- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation
- Name calling e.g. gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner
- Physical intimidation or attacks
- Threats

## Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller Community

- Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background
- Exclusion on the basis of any of the above

## Relational

This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:

- Malicious gossip
- Isolation & exclusion
- Ignoring
- Excluding from the group

- Taking someone's friends away
- Spreading rumours
- Breaking confidence
- Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear
- The "look"
- Use of terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way

### Sexual

- Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching
- Harassment

### Special Educational Needs, Disability

- Name calling
- Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs
- Taking advantage of a person's vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying
- Taking advantage of a person's vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.
- Mimicking a person's disability
- Setting others up for ridicule

### **Relevant School Personnel**

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

- School Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Class teachers and/or relevant Learning Support teachers
- HSCL teacher

### **Education and Prevention Strategies**

The school will utilise a range of education and prevention strategies to encourage good behaviour and discourage bullying. We will use the materials from [www.antibullyingcampaign.ie](http://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie) to raise awareness and to deal with bullying behaviour when it arises. We will seek to develop a positive school culture in the following ways:

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Discuss, with pupils, respectful behaviours in classrooms and around the school.
- ‘Catch them being good’ - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.

- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff will actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- As self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour we will, through both our curricular and extra-curricular programmes, provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.
- We will raise pupils' awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects, taking particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN will include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.
- We will use the elements of the SPHE curriculum which make specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Stay Safe programme is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying.
- We will use all school subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- Good supervisory and monitoring measures will be put in place both to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour.
- The Board of Management will ensure that temporary and substitute staff has sufficient awareness of the school's code of behaviour and its anti-bullying policy.
- Consistent investigation, follow up and recording of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)

Individual class teachers may use some of the following systems:

- Praising appropriate behaviour "catch them being good"
- Proximal praise



- Star charts
- ‘Traffic lights’
- Table points system
- Golden time
- Competition charts
- Class Dojo
- Student of the week
- Group reward system
- Lucky dip/raffle,
- Individual behaviour profiles

### **Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying**

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying will be 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 for investigating, 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:

#### **Reporting bullying behaviour**

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may report a bullying incident to any teacher or member of staff in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher and/or the principal.

- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Note: Where incidents of bullying do not occur on school premises, during the school day, or on the way to/from school, we would ask parents to notify the school of any incidents. However, such incidents cannot be investigated by the school and we would encourage parents/guardians to resolve the issues privately.

### Approach

1. All reports of bullying should be made in the first instance to either the class teacher, principal or any member of staff. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated so that pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. 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. Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
2. The relevant teacher, deputy principal and/or principal will oversee the investigation. Parents 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.
3. Where possible, incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
4. The alleged perpetrator(s) and injured party will be interviewed. Each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about their statements.
5. Other pupils and witnesses may also be interviewed. Interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned.
6. Pupils may be asked for a written account of the details of the incident under investigation. Each group member will be supported through the possible pressure that they may face from other members of the group.

7. When analysing incidents of bullying, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of 'what', 'when', 'who', 'where', 'why'?
8. In cases where bullying has been determined, the perpetrator will be informed that his/her behaviour is unacceptable and in breach of the anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the child being bullied.
9. When it is established that bullying has occurred, parents of the parties involved will be contacted to inform them of the matter and explain the actions that will be taken.
10. In any situation where disciplinary measures are taken, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his/her parents and the school.
11. The injured party and the alleged perpetrator(s) will be assured that all pupils are entitled to be happy in school and free from any type of bullying or intimidation. The injured party will be encouraged to report any further instances that may occur.

### **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:

- Has the bullying behaviour ceased?
  - have any issues between the parties been resolved as far as is practicable?
  - has the relationships between the parties have been restored or improved as far as is practicable?
  - has there been any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents/guardians or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.
- Appropriate follow up should be arranged as agreed between the parties involved to review the situation and reflect on whether the relationship has improved or been restored.
- Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent/guardian must be referred as appropriate to the school's complaint procedures.

- In the event that a parent/guardian has exhausted the school's complaint procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent/guardian 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 will keep a record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents will be reported to the relevant teacher.
- The relevant teacher will investigate all reports of bullying. The teacher will keep a record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved and store these notes in a secure location in the classroom or on Aladdin. (This is the database system that the school uses. It is a secure web-based system that allows the school to store information on pupils, analyse statistics, record attendance, keep copies of report cards and test results etc. For more information please follow this link <https://www.aladdin.ie/>)
- Cases of bullying will be reported to the principal. Relevant information may be shared with staff.

#### Formal - determination that bullying has occurred

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher will keep appropriate written records or records on the Aladdin Database system which will assist in his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- The class teacher or principal will record all incidents of bullying behavior. All records will be retained and stored on the child's profile in the school office. The principal will also keep a record of all incidents of bullying behaviour.

## **Support**

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

1. A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied will be agreed. This might include counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience.
2. A programme of support for pupils involved in bullying behaviour will be part of the school's intervention process. This may include counselling and activities to improve the pupil's self-worth.
3. Children involved in bullying who are deemed to need specific support will, with parental permission, be referred to the National Educational Psychological Services for support.
4. Serious instances of bullying behaviour will be referred to the TUSLA and/or the Gardaí as appropriate in accordance with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary schools. Where school personnel have concerns about a child but are unsure how to proceed, the Designated Liaison Person will seek advice from TUSLA.
5. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour will be encouraged to see the situation from the perspective of the child being bullied.
6. Efforts will be made where practicable to resolve issues with a view to improving and/or restoring the relationship between the pupils.

## **Implementation**

This plan will be supported, developed and implemented in collaboration with the principal and all staff members. This will involve co-ordinating the progress of the plan, encouraging and accepting feedback on its implementation and reporting to staff on findings. The plan will be monitored and evaluated frequently by staff members.

## **Review**

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

**Ratification and Communication**

This Policy was reviewed and revised on \_\_\_\_\_ and ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_ .

Parents can inspect the policy in the school office.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_