



St. Michael's N.S
Rackwallace

Anti-Bullying Policy

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 St. Michael's N.S, Rackwallace 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.

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; and
 - involves collaboration among and between staff and pupils:
- 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.

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.
- Damaging or stealing another person's belongings

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

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

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

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Appendix 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

- The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:
- The Class Teacher initially
- The Principal if necessary

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school include:

- SPHE Lessons
- Anti Bullying websites - www.antibullyingcampaign.ie
- Cyber Bullying Workshop
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Supervision Policy
- Diversity/Anti Bullying Talks (Parents)
- Friendship Week
- RSE Programme
- Co-operative Group Activities
- Team Sports
- The Garda Primary Schools Programme
- The Webwise Primary Programme www.webwise.ie
- Bí Cineálta Document

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

- The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
- 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 as quickly as possible.
- It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.

- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible but some incidents are best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher
- It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. An additional follow-up meeting with parents of the students involved may take place after an appropriate time to ensure that the matter has been resolved satisfactorily.
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour must adhere to the following:

- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement 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 teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour. The completed template should be retained securely by the teacher and a copy given to the Principal.
- The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour no single intervention/support programme works in all situations. Therefore, various strategies and approaches may be used including suggesting that parents seek referrals to appropriate outside agencies in order to receive further support if necessary.

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.

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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 11 March 2014 and reviewed in September 2024

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, is readily accessible to parents and pupils upon request 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. (see Appendix 4) Written notification that the review has been completed (see Appendix 5) will be made available to school personnel, the Parents body and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Parents will be invited to attend any training programmes/workshops provided by NPC/MEC.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review:

In line with Circular 55/2024, The Board of Management will develop its Bí Cineálta policy during the 2024/25 school year and it will come into effect from the start of the 2025/2026 school year.

Appendix 4

St. Michael's
Rackwallace
Monaghan
H18 XY66



Scoil Mhichil,
Rath Mhic Mhalais
Muineachán
H18XY66

secretary@stmichaelsns.com

047-85282

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

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Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

Appendix 5

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

To: _____

The Board of Management of St. Michael's N.S. Rackwallace, wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of _____.
- 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, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____