



# Melview National School

Melview, Longford    Tel: 043 3346197    Roll No.: 07518 E  
Email: [melviewschool@gmail.com](mailto:melviewschool@gmail.com)    Website: [www.melviewns.ie](http://www.melviewns.ie)  
Principal: Bryan Kennedy    Deputy Principal: Carmel Browne

Date: 6/3/2023

Approval: Mr. Jimmy O'Connor

Issued By: Mr. Bryan Kennedy

## Anti-Bullying Policy

Children First National Guidance 2017 outlines that bullying can be defined as repeated aggression whether it be verbal, psychological or physical - that is conducted by an individual or group against others. Children First National Guidance (2017) describes bullying as behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating, and occurs mainly among children in social environments such as schools. It includes behaviours such as physical aggression, cyber bullying, damage to property, intimidation, isolation/exclusion, name calling, malicious gossip and extortion. Bullying can also take the form of identity abuse based on gender, sexual preference, race, family status, ethnicity and religious beliefs. With developments in modern technology, children can also be the victims of non-contact bullying, via mobile phones, the internet and other personal devices.

In accordance with the requirements of the Education Welfare Act (2000) and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB (TUSLA), the Board of Management of Melview National School 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.

Children First National Guidance (2017) and the Anti-Bullying Procedures (2013) 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 Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2017).

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:



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**(a) A positive school culture and climate which**

- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
- encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

**(b) Effective leadership**

**(c) A school-wide approach**

**(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact**

**(e) 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;

**(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**

**(g) Supports for staff including cpd**

**(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)**

**(i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.**

In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* (2013) 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, bullying based on a person's sexual preference, race, family status, ethnicity, membership of the traveller community and religious beliefs; 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.



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Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)*. See Appendix 1.

The Relevant Teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school are: all class teachers, Deputy Principal, Principal.

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

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

## School-wide approach

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it both prevention and intervention.
- An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements
- Professional development through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Encourage a culture of peer respect and support e.g. Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support pupils.
- Development and promotion of common school rules to be on display in each classroom and on corridors.
- Specific lessons to heighten awareness of human right's issues.
- Caring Corner for pupils' input in place on corridor.



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- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils, all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school. The school's antibullying policy will be available on the school website.
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; regular assemblies, annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; student feedback/surveys. Assemblies/Amber Flag. The implementation of NEPS programmes e.g. Friends For Life, Incredible Years, Weaving Wellbeing. Other initiatives such as Get Up Stand Up and Zippy's friends will be explored.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
- Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
- Hand note up with homework.
- Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
- Worry Box in classroom.
- Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
- Administer a confidential questionnaire to Senior pupils.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Identify clear protocols (agreed parental complaints procedure) to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- An Acceptable Use Policy in the school which includes the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.

## Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE, RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Weaving Well Being, Friends for Life, Fun Friends, Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme, Zones of Regulation
- Lessons based on Cyber Bullying - Be Safe-Be Web wise, (Web wise Primary teachers' resources), Diversity and Interculturalism - Show Racism the Red card. Zeeko Cyberbullying programme.



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- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

## **Links to other policies and procedures:**

Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding Statement including Risk Assessment, Cyber Bullying Policy, Health and Safety Statement, School Attendance Statement, Acceptable Use policy, Enrolment/Admissions Policy, Critical Incident Policy, procedures for Supervision of Pupils including attending school events and sporting activities.

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017).

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

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach. Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

## **Reporting bullying behaviour**

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- A suspicion of bullying should be raised with the relevant class teacher first and then if necessary with the Principal.
- Parents are encouraged to make an appointment to speak with the relevant class teacher if they suspect their child is being bullied.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff Secretary and special needs assistants (SNAs) must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.



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## **Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach (see section 6.8.9)**

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant) teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents should be 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;

Questions to be asked when responding to challenging behaviour include:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have your thoughts been since?
- Who has been affected by what you did?
- In what way have they been affected?
- What do you think needs to happen next?

Questions to be asked when responding to those harmed include:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have your thoughts been since?
- How has this affected you / others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?

- If a group is involved, each member may be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved may 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;



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- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;

It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).

- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it 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 parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school;

## Follow up and recording

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
  - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
  - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
  - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the agreed parental complaints procedures.



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- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted **spacing** the agreed parental complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

## Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

### **Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred**

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. Consideration needs to be given to where the records will be made e.g. class incident book. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

### **Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred**

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- The school in consultation with the relevant teacher/s should develop a protocol for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher.

### **Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)**

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:



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- a) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and
- b) Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. The relevant teacher may consult with the Principal or Deputy Principal at any stage in relation to a case. Due consideration needs to be given to where these records are kept, who has access to them, and how long they will be retained.

## Established intervention strategies

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time

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

(see Section 6.8.16 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools)

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
  - SPHE and NEPS Programmes and Pastoral care system
  - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
  - Group work such as circle time
  - Barnardo's Roots of Empathy Programme.
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.



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## 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/ethnicity and membership of the Traveller community.

10. This policy was reviewed and adopted by the Board of Management on the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and is available on request. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

**Signed on behalf of the Board of Management:**

Chairman: Jimmy O'Connor

Date: March 6<sup>th</sup> 2023