



# *St. Mary's Secondary School*

Convent of Mercy, Newport, Co. Tipperary, V94 RY18

Telephone 061-378344 Email: [admin@stmarysnewport.ie](mailto:admin@stmarysnewport.ie)

[www.stmarysnewport.com](http://www.stmarysnewport.com)

Registered Charity Number: 20148379



## **Anti- Bullying Policy**

St. Mary's Secondary School, Newport, is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School under the Trusteeship and the Patronage of C.E.I ST. (Catholic Schools, An Irish Schools Trust). The School is grant aided by the Department of Education & Skills, and is a co-educational school.

**School Management:** The Board of Management of St. Mary's Secondary School is a statutory Board, appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

### **Mission Statement:**

St. Mary's Secondary School, Newport operates as a Catholic co-educational Secondary School, to provide teaching and learning of the highest quality for the benefit of the community which it serves.

### **In pursuing this mission we aim:**

- To provide a quality educational experience that caters for the full range of academic aptitude and abilities.
- To foster the intellectual, physical, social, cultural, moral and religious development of our students.
- To enable pupils to achieve their full potential academically.
- To promote the Catholic ethos and faith.
- To cater for the needs of the local community in so far as ethos, resources and facilities permit.

**Ethos:** As a CEIST school, St. Mary's seeks to promote the five key elements of the CEIST charter.

Promoting Spiritual and Human Development.

Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning.

Showing Respect for Every Person.

Creating Community.

Being Just and Responsible.



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1) In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of St. Mary's Secondary School, Newport 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.

2) The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils, and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- A positive school culture and climate which
  - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
  - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
  - promotes respectful relationships across the school community
- Effective leadership
- A school-wide approach
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies including awareness raising measures that
  - a) Build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
  - b) 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.



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

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- Deliberate exclusion
- Malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying
- Cyber-bullying
- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within 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 Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4) The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows: Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads and Assistant Year Heads. All teachers in St. Mary's Secondary School have a role to play in observing pupil behaviour, and reporting evidence of bullying as appropriate. In the event of a bullying report being made, the relevant teachers will investigate thoroughly.



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

- School participation in the Anti-Bullying and online safety programme, FUSE, developed by DCU Anti-Bullying Centre.
- Awareness Programme (Stand Up!)
- CSPE classes
- SPHE classes
- Information sheet on Cyber and other forms of bullying
- Guest Speakers to speak about the topic
- Student mentoring for First Years
- Anti-Bullying workshop in first term

6) 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). The objective is to firstly ensure that the bullying stops.
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise their professional judgement as to whether bullying has occurred, and how best to the situation might be resolved. The investigation may involve interviews with students, both those directly and indirectly involved, interviews with parents/guardians as well as statements being made.
- Parents/guardians and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation, and to assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents/guardians of the parties involved may be contacted to inform them of the matter, and the actions being taken by the school will be explained to them. The school shall give parents/guardians 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 engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of this school's



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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, in accordance with the principals of restorative practice. Bullying behaviour is considered a serious breach of our School Code of Behaviour, and therefore disciplinary sanctions may be invoked in line with the Code of Behaviour, up to and including expulsion, at the discretion of the Principal.

The relevant teacher **must** use the recording template at Appendix 3 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

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/or

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.

- In relation to bullying in schools, *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011* (Children First) and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* provide that in situations where “the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan”. Therefore, serious instances of bullying behaviour in St. Mary's Secondary School may be referred to Túsla, the children and family agency, and/or the Gardaí as appropriate.

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

As a school, St. Mary's Secondary School Newport will aim to;

- Provide counselling and support for both the victim(s) as well as the perpetrator
- Arrange follow up meetings with relevant parties to monitor welfare of students affected
- Where appropriate, mentoring with pupils trained to provide support
- Restorative practice.



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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 and membership of the Traveller community.

**10)** This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request, and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills, and the patron, if requested.

**11)** Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website as well as being readily accessible to parents and pupils on request, 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 of Education and Skills

## **Timetable for Review**

The Anti-bullying Policy will be reviewed as the need arises, and/or every year. The next review is scheduled to take place in 2025.

## **Policy review team:**

Mr. K. Browne, Ms. K Clohessy, Ms. J Moore, Ms. E. Mullally, Mr. L. O'Dea





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## Relevant dates for this policy

Policy reviewed and amended by staff: 26<sup>th</sup> August, 2021

Consultation with Student Support team: 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2021

Consultation with Programmes Coordinator: 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2021

Forwarded to Parents Council for consultation: 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2021

Consultation with Senior Management: 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2021

Presentation, and consultation with Students Council: 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2021

Anti-bullying policy presented to all students, in an age appropriate manner, and feedback sought: 1<sup>st</sup>- 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2021.

Draft review presented to Board of Management: 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2021

Policy review ratified by Board of Management: 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2021

Consultation with all students, parents, staff: 15<sup>th</sup> September – 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2022

Policy reviewed and ratified by Board of Management: 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2022

Consultation with Parents Council and School Staff: 16<sup>h</sup> November, 2023

Consultation with Students Council: 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2023

Policy reviewed and ratified by Board of Management: 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2024

Signed: Michael Concoran

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 18/1/2024

Signed: [Signature]

Principal, St. Mary's Secondary School

Date: 18/01/2024