The Abbey School
Anti-Bullying Policy 2023-2024

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 The Abbey 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.

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-
     o is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
     o encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
     o 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-
     o build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
     o 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); and
   - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

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 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.

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

Examples of bullying behaviours (this list is not exhaustive):
General behaviours which apply to all
- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.
- 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
- **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/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles
- Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures
- Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

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
- Spreading rumours

- Breaking confidence
- Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear
- The "look"

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 some students' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying
- Taking advantage of some students' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.
- Mimicking a person's disability
- Setting others up for ridicule

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

The Year Head for the relevant year or Year Heads of multiple years if the student's come from different years. The Deputy Principal and Principal may in certain circumstances be included in these investigations.

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:

   1. Through our PE Classes, Lunchtime activities, Team Sports, Sports Day, Christmas and Summer Tournaments students have the opportunity to grow in confidence, self-esteem and build resilience that will help them in this regard.
   2. A School-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community. This starts with the student induction day held for each year on their return after the summer holidays where "Care and Respect for others" is the core theme.

   3. Place LGBT posters in prominent locations around the school

   4. Include Cyber Bullying, Identity based bullying and in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying as part of the curriculum of SPHE at Junior Cycle.

   5. Engage the services of the Tipperary Regional Youth Services who have expertise in this area to come in to classes and hold workshops with the boys in Transition Year, Fifth Year and Sixth year.

   6. Invite Guest speakers to the school to hold Work Shops with all students regarding Cyber Bullying and their internet footprint as a result of social media. These workshops can also highlight the dangers of Cyber Bullying.

7. Promote the Internet Acceptable Use Policy by publishing it in the Student Journal and asking the boys to sign it on an annual basis.

8. Foster a culture of inclusiveness and acceptance for those students with disabilities or with Special Education Needs throughout the school. This would be particularly important for all staff teaching first years as this time is crucial in establishing a culture of inclusiveness' and acceptance of diversity.

9. Questions on bullying will be included on the student Survey of First Years administered at the end of September before the Parent's feedback meeting.

10. The Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme will be run in conjunction with SPHE at Junior Cycle.

11. Subject Departments are encouraged to identify areas of their curriculum where areas relating to respect, diversity, prejudice and stereotyping can be identified.

12. An effective Supervision system is in place on the school grounds, corridors and classrooms to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and ensure early identification of such behaviour.

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 (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

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);

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including students, 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.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- 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;

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach

- 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 students 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 students concerned. Students 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.
- 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 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 students;
- 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 students 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)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 school's complaints procedures, which includes an appeal.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's 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

Records: Protocol
- Access to the records is open to school management and relevant teachers only.
- Records will be retained for a period of up to five years after the student leaves the school.

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. 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.

Informal-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-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:

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) the following circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

- Where the bullying behaviour poses an immediate risk to the health and safety of another student/s or members of the school community
- Where the "recipient" has disclosed that he/she is particularly vulnerable and at "risk"
- Where the alleged "bully" discloses that he/she is at risk

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. Due consideration needs to be given to where these records are kept, who has access to them, and how long they will be retained. Decisions around record keeping should be noted in this policy.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (See Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

In-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the students affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.

- o Pastoral care system
- o Buddy / Peer mentoring system
- o Tutor/Year head system
- o Student Support Team
- o Promote Safer Internet Day
- o Promote Stand Up Awareness Week Within the School

If students require counselling of 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.

Students should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher. Established intervention strategies may include;

- Teacher interviews with all students

- Negotiating agreements between students 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)s to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative Practice
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires (See PDST Anti-Bullying Support Material)

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.

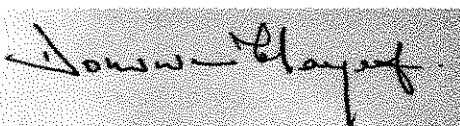## 9. Prevention of Harassment

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 (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

11. 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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _Dónal Ballaic_   Date: 4/12/23

Principal.

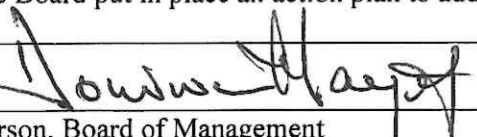Signed: _____   Date: 4/12/23

Chairperson

Appendix 4 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 *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?	Yes
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	Yes
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?	Yes
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?	Yes
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	Yes
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	Yes
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	Yes
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?	Yes
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	No
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	No
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	No
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?	Yes
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	No
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	No.

Signed _____ Date 4.12.2023 .
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date 4/12/23
Principal

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

To: _Parents & Students_

The Board of Management of _The Abbey_ wishes to inform you that:

o The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of __4/12/23__ [date].

o 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 _____   Date _4.12.2023_ .
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____   Date _4/12/23_
Principal