Midleton College

Anti-Bullying Policy

Version 2.2, Nov 2021

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB), the Board of Management of Midleton College has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the College's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* that were published in September 2013.

2. Midleton College has a Church of Ireland ethos—an ethos that is both inclusive and ecumenical in its wider mission. The College is a small, familial, diverse, learning community, where each student realises his or her potentials in an atmosphere of respect, care, support and encouragement. The goal is that students will leave with the academic, personal and moral qualities required for life beyond the College. The College ethos explicitly states that 'all are expected to display a high level of respect for all others'. The College community believes that everyone has a right to a safe, inclusive learning and working environment.

3. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students. Consistent with the inclusive nature of its Church of Ireland ethos, members of the Midleton College community reject bullying in any context or any form. The Board of Management 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 students 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 College-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 students and explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying.
   - Effective supervision and monitoring of students;
   - Supports for staff;

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- Consistent recording, investigation and follow-up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies);
- On-going evaluation, and yearly review, of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

4. **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 & transphobic 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 electronic message[1] or written or spoken message, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's *Code of Behaviour* and *Rules 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. [2]

Negative behaviour which does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the College's *Code of Behaviour* and *Rules of Behaviour*.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in *Appendix 1*; Midleton College puts a particular emphasis on bullying that is racist or sexual in nature.

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

A student, parent or a member of staff may bring a bullying concern to any teacher at Midleton College. The prevention, investigation, recording and reporting of bullying is the responsibility of all teachers.

The teacher is obliged to contact the Deputy Principal or Principal to inform them that a bullying allegation has been made. The Deputy Principal or Principal may choose to investigate the allegation themselves or they may nominate another member of staff to be the 'relevant teacher' in accordance with section 6.8.3 of the NEWB guidelines. In general, the nominated 'relevant teacher' will be the teacher who becomes aware of the issue or to whom it is reported.

In cases of bullying, the relevant teacher should inform the relevant form teachers and, on the form attached (*see Appendix 6*), the Deputy Principal or Principal.

6. **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:**

Midleton College recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on students. It is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

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[1] 'Electronic message' may be construed as a text (SMS) message, a social media message, a telephone call a message issued on any form of public or private internet forum, or any other form of message transmitted over the internet or other electronic media in any way whatsoever.
[2] This may be in any form whatsoever, see explanation *Op. Cit 1* 'electronic message'

(i) Positive school climate - Midleton College, consistent with its Church of Ireland ethos, explicitly welcomes diversity and difference.

- The students from all over the world are an important members of the College community, and have been from the early eighteenth-century. Other cultures are celebrated at both formal and non-formal events such as International Day and Chinese New Year celebrations.

- The diverse range of student achievements are recognised and celebrated through whole school assemblies, form meetings, on the college web-site and through social media.

- The College has a commitment to support and encourage students in wellbeing. Transition year students participate in a personal development module. There is an annual whole school Health, Fitness and Wellbeing week run by the PE and wellbeing teams as well as wellbeing days each month organised with the assistance of the school catering department.

- Students are explicitly and regularly taught what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school. The use of discriminatory and derogatory language is consistently tackled.

- The Special Educational Needs (SEN) Department assists students who may need extra support through programmes such as Friends for Life and Lunch Time Club as required.

(ii) Strong teacher-student relationships - the staff of the school aims to build relationships with students in all aspects of school life.

- Staff are actively engaged in a wide range of extra-curricular activities from sports to language clubs, from choral activities to astronomy, to appeal to a wide range of student interests.

- The boarding element of the school supports students in a "home away from home" capacity, with an increased level of interaction between boarding staff and students. As such boarding staff play a key role in being available to support students outside of the classroom.

- This strong teacher-student bond creates a positive climate that can prevent instances of bullying, identify any bullying taking place and can allow bullying to be reported without trepidation.

(iii) Bullying awareness – the school supports the development of students' awareness and understanding of bullying.

- The Anti-Bullying Policy is widely available, printed in student journals, published on the College website and included in visual displays around the school.

- At the start of each academic year, every form group signs the Midleton College Anti-Bullying Charter (*see Appendix 5*) which is displayed in the form group classroom.

- Bullying and its effects are discussed with both students and parents at the Form I Induction, (see *Appendix 3*, for information regarding parental guidance on bullying).

- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) classes for each year group cover bullying and its effects in accordance with the College SPHE plan and the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) policy. In senior cycle classes, bullying is covered as part of the Politics and Society curriculum.

- The Students' Council play a key role in the College's Anti-Bullying Programme. Members of the Council undergo annual Anti-Bullying training and assist in creating visual display materials for the whole school.

- Non-teaching staff have an annual anti-bullying briefing.

- The school conducts an anti-bullying awareness program with Form II students through SPHE – this is derived from Dublin City University's *FUSE Anti-Bullying Program* which the school has joined.

(iv) Cyber-bullying – the school recognises that the evolution of modern communication technologies has led to an increase in this form of bullying compared to more traditional forms.

- Cyber-bullying is formally covered in Computer Studies classes in Forms I, II, III & IV.

- Form tutors address this topic with their students in Form assembly in accordance with the AUP policy and Social Media Policy.

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- The school, in conjunction with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), organises yearly presentations for students and parents on a topic related to cyber-bullying.

(v) Homophobic & Transphobic bullying – the school promotes an education and awareness campaign regarding these issues.

- The College participates in the annual Stand Up Awareness Week, run by 'BeLonG To', which focuses on transphobic and homophobic bullying. This is a whole school initiative involving an education and awareness campaign, fundraising and the promotion of inclusion and celebration of diversity.

- SPHE classes for each year group cover the topics of sexual orientation and sexual identity in accordance with our RSE policy.

(vi) Bystander Responsibilities – the College recognises the role of the bystander in preventing or stopping bullying behaviour.

- Students & staff are explicitly taught about their responsibilities and powers as bystanders in a bullying situation. *(see Appendix 4)*

- The role of the bystander is highlighted in visual displays around the College campus.

(vii) Mentoring – the school recognises the importance of peer support to build a collaborative and caring school community.

- When students arrive in school for the first time they are usually nervous, excited, disorientated, confused and unsure of themselves. The mentor plays a vital role in helping them settle in successfully to their new environment.

- Each year transition year students are invited to apply to train as peer mentors for the following year. This acts to ease the transition from Primary school to Secondary school, thus supporting first year students as they establish familiarity with the new school environment.

- Sixth year prefects act as mentors to new students that arrive into other years.

- Students who act as mentors benefit by acknowledging their leadership responsibility and displaying kindness as they act as a positive role model.

(viii) Racist bullying – consistent with the school's inclusive Church of Ireland ethos, it is expected that all students to find Midleton College a safe and welcoming place where they are able to achieve success, irrespective of their nationality, or ethnic background.

- However, it is not possible to achieve this if any member of the College faces prejudice or hostility because of their race or ethnic origins. Every child has the right to learn; the right to be different; and the right to be happy.

- The College endeavours to become an environment that is actively *anti-racialist* or *anti-racist.*[3] All associated with the School are committed to dealing with incidents involving racism (including prejudice and stereotyping), racialist harassment, and name calling, in the event that such conduct might occur.

- A racist incident is behaviour or language that makes a person feel unwelcome or marginalised because of their colour, culture, religion, or national origin.

- Unacceptable racist acts include: physical assault or threats, inciting racism in others, expressing prejudices or deliberate misinformation on racial or ethnic distinctions distribution of racist materials, treating others less favourably on the basis of race, racist name-calling, racist joke-making or the use of racist language, refusal to cooperate with other people because of their ethnic origin, engaging in racist stereotyping. This list is not exhaustive.

The measures the school is taking in this regard include the following:

Recording

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[3] A notion that distinctive human characteristics are determined by race. '"racism" carries in itself the condemnation of what it means…Basically, racism lives in practice, not in theory'.*C.f.,* H.F Augstein, 'Racism', in *The Oxford Companion to the Body*, ed. Colin Blakemore and Sheila Jennett (Oxford University Press, 2003).

All disclosed incidents of racism are investigated and recorded as *per* the recording Sheet used in this policy; incidents are managed according to the *Code of Behaviour* and/or the *Anti-Bullying* policy as appropriate.

The number of bullying incidents – specifically involving racism bullying – will be reported separately to the Board of Management.

Student Focus Group

A yearly focus group on racism in the College is convened by the Principal or other nominated teacher and findings of this group are communicated to both staff and the Board of Management for consideration when reviewing the *Anti-Bullying* policy.

Staff CPD

Staff will continue to undergo CPD in the area of anti-racism. The Board of Management will give special consideration for courses in this area when allocating funding. All staff will be distributed copies of the Equality Authority document '*Equality in Second-level Schools: A Training Manual for Educators and Trainers*'.

Role Model

The College will seek opportunities to ensure that the role models visible to the students are reflective of diverse nature of our student body.

Curriculum

The school curriculum provides an opportunity for all to learn about racism and its effects. It additionally allows for students to learn the value of cultural diversity and understanding.

The relevant subjects include: CSPE, SPHE, Politics & Society, History, English and Religious Education.

In these subject areas the importance of reporting racist incidences and the role of bystanders will be emphasised. A discussion on the expectations around racism will form part of the induction of Form I students.

Consideration should be given to texts and resources used in class to ensure that they are culturally diverse and appropriate.

College Events

Midleton College will actively seek opportunities to raise awareness of cultural diversity and racism e.g.

- European Anti-Racism week (March)
- Black History Month (October)
- Human Rights Day (10 December)
- A Multicultural Day
- Invite guest speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds and origins to serve as positive role models
- Yellow Flag Programme

(viii) Sexual bullying – the Rape Crisis Network Ireland 2021 report *"Storm and Stress – An Exploration of Sexual Harassment Amongst Adolescents"* states that 80% of adolescents disclosed being

subjected to some form of sexual harassment, 24% being subjected to physical and extreme forms of sexual harassment[4].

- Sexual bullying can be viewed as incidents of unwanted sexual, verbal and nonverbal behaviours which draw on gender-based beliefs and sexist hostility. It can range from unwanted banter to uninvited sexual contact. It violates a person's dignity and creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the young person.

- There is a significant body of research that exists on the impacts of sexual harassment on adolescents, which include: low self-esteem, depression, suicidal ideation, eating disorders, panic attacks, self-harm, self-blame, problems in body image, loneliness, difficulties with sleep, academic under-performance, reduced feelings of academic competence, problems in school attendance and engagement, problems socialising, problems in regulating emotions.

- The ERSI 2020 document *"Talking about sex and sexual behaviour of young people in Ireland"* states that schools can potentially influence sexual behaviour in two ways: firstly, intentionally, through the provision of information and advice on sex as part of the school curriculum; and secondly, and more indirectly, through the way in which the school climate (that is, the nature of relationships between teachers and students and among students) and the network of peers can shape young people's sense of themselves and the behaviour in which they engage[5].

The measures the school is taking in this regard include the following:

Recording

All disclosed incidents of sexual harassment are investigated and recorded as per Recording Sheet used in this policy; incidents are managed according to the Code of Behaviour and/or the Anti-Bullying policy as appropriate.

RSE Program

Students are introduced to a concept of sexual bullying as defined above in SPHE, Wellbeing or Guidance. Specifically, the nature of *consent* will be discussed in these subjects.

Bystander Awareness

In Transition Year, students will undertake the Bystander Awareness course piloted in conjunction with University College Cork (UCC). This will deal with the role of the Bystander who witnesses sexual harassment or bullying.

Journal

A page specifically about *consent* will be developed for the TY & Homework Journals.

External Speakers

Students are given access to speakers who specifically deal with sexual bullying including the local Community Guard, Garda Youth Liaison and a speaker from the Rape Crisis centre.

Staff CPD

All SPHE teachers are given copies of the two documents mentioned above and supported in attending courses such as Bystander Awareness training or equivalent.

7. **The College'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:**

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[4] Michelle Walsh, *Storm and Stress: An Exploration of Sexual Harassment Amongst Adolescents* (Dublin: Rape Crisis Network, Ireland, 2021).

[5] Anne Nolan and Emer Smyth, *Talking about Sex and Sexual Behaviour of Young People in Ireland*, 2020.

The primary aim of the investigating teacher is the resolve any issues with the relationship between the parties involved. Students and parents are required to cooperate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring the relationships between the parties involved. (See *Appendix 2*, for advice on Best Practice when dealing with a possible Bullying Incident)

Teachers should take a calm, non-judgemental, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour. Incidents are generally 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 students concerned. Individual interviews would be conducted first; thereafter, those involved may be interviewed as a group. Written accounts may be sought from the parties involved and written accounts of interviews may be kept.

It is up to the relevant teacher to use his or her professional judgement as to whether bullying has occurred.

If bullying has not occurred, the relevant teacher must give the Deputy Principal or Principal a report in writing outlining the reason(s) why they adjudged bullying has not occurred.

If bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records and the recording template attached (*see Appendix 6*) must be used to record the behaviour. This must be given immediately to the Deputy Principal or Principal.

If it is determined that there has been bullying, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and the actions to be taken. The student who has engaged in bullying behaviour should also be informed how the behaviour constitutes bullying.

There may be situations where issues arise, which can be dealt with comprehensively in a pastoral manner without the express use of sanctions. This will typically involve a meeting with a teacher(s) or Guidance Counsellor or a series of meetings with the student(s) who has allegedly behaved in an unacceptable manner as well as a parent/guardian. Similarly, a series of meetings with the alleged victim and a parent/guardian will take place. Where wrongdoing has been agreed a progress plan setting out the changed behaviour which must be demonstrated and recognised by the relevant member(s) of staff over or within an agreed time period will be provided in writing – this should be provided to the Deputy Principal or Principal with the Recording Form (*see Appendix 6*).

In the event that a pastoral approach is unsuccessful and where an individual or group of individuals are found to have been bullying another person(s) their behaviour will be formally sanctioned. This may involve detention, Saturday detention, suspension from school and/or recommendation for expulsion to the Board of Management. The student(s) concerned will again be required to make specific changes to their behaviour within a specified time-frame which will be monitored and reviewed, typically by a Form Teacher or the Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal or Principal as appropriate.

The sanction applied to any student is a matter between the student, their parents and the school.

Where it is appropriate the College may seek the input of external professional resources such as independent counsellors or statutory professional agencies with extensive experience in the resolution of specific situations as appropriate.

Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties should be arranged with a view to bringing them together at an appropriate juncture.

In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, they should contact the Principal in writing.

Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.

In the event that a parent has exhausted the College's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the College must advise the parents/guardians of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

8. **The school's programme of support for working with students affected by bullying is as follows**:

Midleton College recognises a duty of care in such circumstances to those who are being bullied, to those who witness events as well as those engaged in such behaviour and as such, support should be offered to all students affected.

The school may utilise its Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain or other appropriate staff member to help the students concerned. If appropriate the College mentoring scheme may be used. It may be appropriate to help the students concerned integrate into extra-curricular activities or other social settings.

The College may also advise parents of the need for external support, seek advice or issue a report to Tusla or other statutory agencies as appropriate.

Serious instances of bullying, as determined by the Principal, should, in accordance with the DES "Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2017" be referred to Tusla, the Gardaí or other services as appropriate.[6]

9. **Reporting to Board of Management**

The Principal will report to the Board of Management at each meeting the number of recorded instances of bullying. They should also confirm the status of each of these cases – whether they have been dealt with or are in the process of being dealt with.

The College will also give the number of recorded racist incidents and whether these were considered as bullying. These reports will be considered during the annual review of the anti-bullying policy.

10. **Supervision and Monitoring of Students**

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.

11. **Prevention of Harassment**

The Board of Management confirms that the College will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of students or staff, or the harassment of students or staff on any of the following specified nine grounds, *viz.*, i. gender (including transgender), ii civil status, iii. family status, iv. sexual orientation, v. religion, vi. age, vii. disability, viii. and ix. membership of the Traveller Community.

12. This policy was first adopted by the Board of Management on 27th February 2017.

13. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once every school year – feedback will be sought from the teaching body, PTA and the Student Council. Written notification that the review has been completed, and the policy that emerges, will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the PTA and Student Council. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department of Education.

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[6] *C.f.,* www.education.ie for full details.

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date:

Signed: 22/11/21
_____
Principal

Date: 22/11/21

Reviewed November 2021
Date of next review: September 2022

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Appendix 1   **Types of Bullying Behaviour[7]**

- **Harassment:** any form of unwanted conduct in relation to any of the nine grounds named in the equality legislation that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the victim. The nine grounds are gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community.

- **Sexual harassment:** any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for them.

- **Physical aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While students often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

- **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

- **Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the student in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the student or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore" (implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person; non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".

- **Cyber-bullying:** This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. It can include sending mean or abusive text messages/ making mean or abusive calls; posting mean/ abusive messages/comments on social networking sites/ online forums or changing details while pretending to be that person/ creating websites/ false social network accounts to make fun of another person; excluding people from 'friend' lists or blocking them for no apparent reason. Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

- **Name calling**: Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.

- **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a student's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

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[7] Taken from Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2013*

- **Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted student not delivering on the demand). A student may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

- **Homophobic/transphobic bullying:** Name calling e.g. gay, queer, lesbian, etc.; spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation; taunting a person of a different sexual orientation.

- **Racial bullying:** Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background.

- **Bullying of Special Educational Needs students:** Where students are treated less worthy as a result of their disability or special educational need.

It is important to realise that means of bullying are constantly changing and types of bullying behaviour can be expanded in light of the experience of the school community

Appendix 2   **Guidelines for Best Practice when dealing with a possible Bullying Incident[8]**

1. Interview the victim, alleged bully and any witnesses separately.
2. Try to ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the students interviewed, for example by texting or messaging. In particular, persons accused of bullying (or being accomplices of some sort) should be interviewed either in quick succession OR by separate people simultaneously. This is to pre-empt any collusion or 'synchronisation' of accounts. It is also essential because it will assist in identifying false accusations.
3. Use a room that allows you to interview in privacy. A witness is recommended for serious incidents.
4. Keep a written record – it may help to have a copy of the Recording Template available (*see Appendix 6*).
5. Avoid making premature assumptions. It is very important not to be judgemental at this stage and the presumption of innocence is crucial.
6. Be non-confrontational.
7. Encourage as complete a response as possible and give them the time to do so. Often a victim will withhold information because they worry that it may appear trivial, or because they are embarrassed by something that has been done to them.
8. Interview additional witnesses/bystanders for information and complete the report form (*see Appendix 6*) in the appropriate place.
9. Reiterate to witnesses that there are no innocent bystanders - they are all responsible if anyone is being bullied.
10. Listen carefully to all accounts - several students saying the same does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth, particularly if they have had an opportunity to discuss the incident in advance.
11. If the bullied student might have provoked the bullying incident, help them to understand how this might have happened. However, this must be handled with great care because the victim must never be made to feel that he/she is to blame.
12. Do not attach blame until your investigation is complete.

Talking to the alleged bully
1. Adopt a problem-solving approach which moves a bully on from justifying themselves. Ask the alleged bully to suggest ways in which the situation can be improved.
2. Invite them to go through the Charter and measure their behaviour against the requirements of the Charter (*see Appendix 5*).
3. Tell all students interviewed that they must not discuss the interview with other students (other than to acknowledge their wrongdoing), and that to do so will be considered to be a further breach of the rules. They are, however, to be encouraged to discuss anything with their parents and/or the relevant teacher.
4. Keep written records – it may help to have a copy of the Recording Template available (*see Appendix 6*).
5. If you are satisfied that bullying did take place, help the student to understand the consequences of their actions and warn them that there must be no further intimidation. Inform them calmly and clearly of the type of sanction to be used if the bullying is repeated.
6. Regardless of whether there is a decision to impose a sanction/punishment it is usually of immense value that the person(s) who bullied apologises to the victim or where appropriate writes a letter of apology to the victim. If there is more than one person responsible, then this needs to be handled with particular care so that it does not become a further opportunity to collude against the victim(s).
7. Try for reconciliation and a genuine apology from the student(s). <u>Do not, however, force a face-to-face meeting</u>. This must be the decision of the students and <u>in particular that of the victim(s)</u>.
8. Realise that some students do not appreciate the distress they are causing and are not willing to change their behaviour.
9. Try to reach agreement on reasonable long-term behaviour.
10. Prepare the student who has bullied to face their peer group - discuss what they will say to others.

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[8] Drawn from the guidelines of the ISPCC and the NSPCC

Appendix 3   **Parental Guidance regarding Bullying**

1. Talk about bullying at home, and seek to ensure that your child understands that it is wrong to bully, or to be seen to support the bullying of another person by acting as a bystander in an incident.
2. Prepare your child for a time when they might be the target for bullying behaviour. As part of this, explore some of the reasons why someone may bully others.
3. Highlight that silence is the best friend of bullying and, therefore, the importance that is attached to letting someone know.
4. Teach your child the skills of assertiveness by modelling it at home. A willingness to listen before judging, rather than being reactive, coupled with learning to use the word 'I' is one of the secrets of assertive communication. For example, I want you to stop doing that. The assertive child will be able to: stand tall; maintain eye contact; and express him/ herself clearly and calmly.
5. Build empathy in your child, this has a key role to play in the prevention of bullying.
6. Remembering that no one is born with negative thoughts of themselves, work to raise your child's self-esteem. Recognise, praise and reward your child's effort as well as their successes. Give them responsibility; ask for their help and for their opinions. Take care that an emotional response to a situation doesn't lead to saying something to or about your child that criticises or belittles them.
7. A child's resilience and their sense of self-worth are closely aligned. Fostering resilience in your child will help them to deal well with negative situations.
8. Supporting your child in the development of strong friendships will also make them less vulnerable to bullying and rejection.
9. Encourage your child to participate in activities, sporting or otherwise, that have the capacity to provide opportunities for: personal achievement; confidence building; and the promotion of self-esteem and self-discipline.
10. Help your child to master the skills of mediation and conflict resolution.
11. Encourage your child to be a defender, to help someone when they are down and unable to help themselves.
12. One of the most important things that any parent can do in terms of countering bullying is to become acquainted with the signs and symptoms that can emerge in children or young people if they are being bullied or if they are bullying others. This will support identification of a bullying problem and, therefore, early intervention. Some possible indicators that your child is being bullied include: unexplained bruises and cuts; unexplained damage to clothing; signs of anxiety and distress; changes in mood or behaviour; deterioration in academic performance; a reluctance to go to school; additional requests for money or stealing money; damage to or loss of personal belongings; negative reactions, such as getting upset, when online, coming offline or viewing text messages.
13. Parents can play a huge role in preventing cyber-bullying. Although parents are often seen as digital immigrants and their children as digital natives, it is important that parents emphasise the importance of online responsibilities to their child, as it is in this area that the child's knowledge may be less extensive. Appropriate online behaviour is the same as appropriate behaviour in the 'real world'. It is also very important that parents let their child know that they can go to them for support if they are being bullied.
14. Teach your child to be respectful and responsible online. Children should be made aware of the consequences of cyber-bullying for all involved and to stop and think before they post online or send texts that may be deemed abusive or threatening. Explain that the things they do on their social media devices can have long-term consequences: both legal and psychological.
15. Parents should look out for opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills in this area e.g. attend school talks, avail of parenting courses.
16. Be aware of your child's Internet and mobile phone use so that you will recognise if they are the subject of, or involved in cyber-bullying. The main mobile operators in Ireland have produced a booklet to explain the additional features of modern mobile phones.
17. Familiarise yourself with online chat lingo.
18. Curtail the use of mobiles at bedtime. By removing the phone at bedtime, adults can help remove the risk of an impulsive decision or victimisation.
19. Irish mobile phone operators offer parents a "dual access" where both child and parent have access to the records held on the account. There are also parental controls available where certain services (such

as the Internet) can be limited. Parents should contact their operator to obtain more details about this service.

20. Mobile Minder is a service for android and smart phones. This service allows parents to monitor all contacts to and from their child's phone. Parents are alerted if text messages contained with words linked to cyber-bullying are received or sent.

21. Parents need to challenge the culture of 'continuous accesses to technology by setting a time in the evening when technology is turned off. Technology provides many advantages to us all, but parents need to limit the amount of control such devices take on our lives.

22. If your child is a victim of cyber-bullying, it is important to remind them that it is not their fault. So many students internalise what is being said about them and this can lead to long term problems. Encourage them to talk to you.

23. Although it is understandable that you may be reluctant to invade your child's private space, you should remember that this issue needs to take second place to the need to protect your child. Research indicates that parental guidance of Internet use increases the probability that adolescents will react to support victims of cyber-bullying. It is also important for you to use parental controls on your home computer.

Appendix 4   ***Bystander role in Bullying***

Research over the past 30 years has looked at the part played by bystanders and their critical role in bullying and how to tackle it. The key relevant findings are:

- Bystanders play a key role in preventing or stopping bullying. They can intervene:
  - By discouraging the bully,
  - By defending the victim,
  - By redirecting the situation away from bullying
  - By getting help
  - By rallying support from peers to stand up against bullying
  - By reporting an incident to adults.
- 85% of bullying takes place with bystanders present; this includes incidents of cyber-bullying.
- The presence of bystanders who do <u>not</u> react adversely provides positive reinforcement to the person who is bullying and sends the message that bullying is acceptable.
- Nearly 60% of the time bullying will <u>stop in less than 10 seconds</u> when peers intervene.
- These conclusions show how vital it is that *all* of a community, but especially students (since most bullying occurs out of the sight of adults), understand their responsibilities and their power in preventing and tackling bullying.
- It is essential to dispel any notion that this amounts to 'telling tales' or that they will in any way suffer repercussions as a result.
- It is also worth noting that bystanders who do not intervene or who fail to report bullying often suffer negative consequences themselves. These may include:
  - Pressure to participate in the bullying;
  - Anxiety about speaking to anyone about the bullying
  - Feelings of powerlessness to stop bullying
  - Vulnerability to becoming victimised
  - Fear of associating with the victim, the bully, or the bully's friends
  - Guilt for not having defended the victim
- Empowering young people to act against incidents of bullying that they witness will:
  - Add to their self-esteem
  - Increase their sense of community
  - Add to the pride they feel as good, kind and respected members of that community, both at school and as they go out into the world.

MIDLETON COLLEGE ANTI-BULLYING CHARTER

BULLYING

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.

This includes relational bullying, cyber-bullying and identity based bullying.

Midleton College is an inclusive community, where all students are entitled to be respected and, equally are expected to respect others. Students, staff and parents work together to ensure that students learn in an atmosphere of care and support and be a school which does not tolerate bullying.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

I, along with ALL members of our School Community, have **a Duty and a Responsibility:**

- To create a positive school climate where I treat others with respect and kindness at all times.
- Not to hurt, harm, victimise or exclude others, and not to condone or ignore others who do so.
- To change my behaviour immediately if I display bullying of any kind.
- To prevent and report bullying in all its forms.
- To use technology appropriately and not in a way that hurts or harms others.
- To understand diversity and recognise that everyone should be treated with respect regardless of any differences.

I agree to uphold this Charter and to support others in doing the same:
Form Group_____

Form Teacher_____   **Date_____**

Midleton College   Connolly St., Midleton, Co. Cork

1. Name of student of concern and form group

Name _____ Form_____

2. Student(s) engaged in possible bullying behaviour

Name	Form	Role *	Level of Involvement**

* E.g. leader/instigator, accomplice, enabler, bystander, defender etc. ** 5 = very involved, 1 = indirectly involved

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern:

_____

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression		Isolation/Exclusion		Cyber-bullying		Malicious Gossip	
Damage to Property		Name Calling		Intimidation		Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Gender	Faith	Disability/SEN related	Race	Sexual Orientation	Sexual Identity	Other

8. Description of bullying behaviour and its impact (including dates, personnel involved including bystanders)

Use additional sheet if required

9.   Details of actions taken

Victim	Bully	Bystanders	Other

Signed: _____ (Relevant Teacher)   **Date:** _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____
(all relevant notes should be copied and accompany this form)

Checklist	Yes/No
Is the same person(s) involved in previous cases?	
Have parents/guardians been informed?	
Has the Form Teacher been informed?	
Have each of the persons allegedly involved been spoken to <u>individually</u>?	
Have the persons allegedly involved been spoken to as a group? (not recommended until <u>all</u> alleged perpetrators have been spoken to individually)	
Has a follow-up date been fixed?	
Has a plan of action been organised with the victim and their parents/guardian?	
Has a plan of action been organised with the alleged perpetrator(s) and their parents/guardian?	
Are any relevant notes/other information attached to this report?	

Other Measures taken (if required)	Details – include dates
Referral to Guidance Counsellor	
Medical treatment	
Involvement of Gardaí	
Involvement of another external agency	
Other	

Details of other measures/action

Person/body concerned:	Date of measure:	Details:

Any other outcomes/relevant action

Has there been any further allegations of bullying involving these students? **YES / NO**

Signed_____ **Date**_____

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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 College'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*?	
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 students?	
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?	

Signed_____   Date_____
    Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed_____   Date_____
    Principal

Midleton College

Anti-Bullying Policy

Version 2.2, Nov 2021

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB), the Board of Management of Midleton College has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the College's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* that were published in September 2013.

2. Midleton College has a Church of Ireland ethos—an ethos that is both inclusive and ecumenical in its wider mission. The College is a small, familial, diverse, learning community, where each student realises his or her potentials in an atmosphere of respect, care, support and encouragement. The goal is that students will leave with the academic, personal and moral qualities required for life beyond the College. The College ethos explicitly states that 'all are expected to display a high level of respect for all others'. The College community believes that everyone has a right to a safe, inclusive learning and working environment.

3. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students. Consistent with the inclusive nature of its Church of Ireland ethos, members of the Midleton College community reject bullying in any context or any form. The Board of Management 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 students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
     - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
   - Effective leadership;
   - A College-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 students and explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying.
   - Effective supervision and monitoring of students;
   - Supports for staff;

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- Consistent recording, investigation and follow-up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies);
- On-going evaluation, and yearly review, of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

4. **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 & transphobic 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 electronic message[1] or written or spoken message, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's *Code of Behaviour* and *Rules 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. [2]

Negative behaviour which does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the College's *Code of Behaviour* and *Rules of Behaviour*.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in *Appendix 1*; Midleton College puts a particular emphasis on bullying that is racist or sexual in nature.

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

A student, parent or a member of staff may bring a bullying concern to any teacher at Midleton College. The prevention, investigation, recording and reporting of bullying is the responsibility of all teachers.

The teacher is obliged to contact the Deputy Principal or Principal to inform them that a bullying allegation has been made. The Deputy Principal or Principal may choose to investigate the allegation themselves or they may nominate another member of staff to be the 'relevant teacher' in accordance with section 6.8.3 of the NEWB guidelines. In general, the nominated 'relevant teacher' will be the teacher who becomes aware of the issue or to whom it is reported.

In cases of bullying, the relevant teacher should inform the relevant form teachers and, on the form attached (*see Appendix 6*), the Deputy Principal or Principal.

6. **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:**

Midleton College recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on students. It is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

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[1] 'Electronic message' may be construed as a text (SMS) message, a social media message, a telephone call a message issued on any form of public or private internet forum, or any other form of message transmitted over the internet or other electronic media in any way whatsoever.

[2] This may be in any form whatsoever, see explanation *Op. Cit 1* 'electronic message'

(i) Positive school climate - Midleton College, consistent with its Church of Ireland ethos, explicitly welcomes diversity and difference.

- The students from all over the world are an important members of the College community, and have been from the early eighteenth-century. Other cultures are celebrated at both formal and non-formal events such as International Day and Chinese New Year celebrations.
- The diverse range of student achievements are recognised and celebrated through whole school assemblies, form meetings, on the college web-site and through social media.
- The College has a commitment to support and encourage students in wellbeing. Transition year students participate in a personal development module. There is an annual whole school Health, Fitness and Wellbeing week run by the PE and wellbeing teams as well as wellbeing days each month organised with the assistance of the school catering department.
- Students are explicitly and regularly taught what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school. The use of discriminatory and derogatory language is consistently tackled.
- The Special Educational Needs (SEN) Department assists students who may need extra support through programmes such as Friends for Life and Lunch Time Club as required.

(ii) Strong teacher-student relationships - the staff of the school aims to build relationships with students in all aspects of school life.

- Staff are actively engaged in a wide range of extra-curricular activities from sports to language clubs, from choral activities to astronomy, to appeal to a wide range of student interests.
- The boarding element of the school supports students in a "home away from home" capacity, with an increased level of interaction between boarding staff and students. As such boarding staff play a key role in being available to support students outside of the classroom.
- This strong teacher-student bond creates a positive climate that can prevent instances of bullying, identify any bullying taking place and can allow bullying to be reported without trepidation.

(iii) Bullying awareness – the school supports the development of students' awareness and understanding of bullying.

- The Anti-Bullying Policy is widely available, printed in student journals, published on the College website and included in visual displays around the school.
- At the start of each academic year, every form group signs the Midleton College Anti-Bullying Charter (*see Appendix 5*) which is displayed in the form group classroom.
- Bullying and its effects are discussed with both students and parents at the Form I Induction, (see *Appendix 3*, for information regarding parental guidance on bullying).
- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) classes for each year group cover bullying and its effects in accordance with the College SPHE plan and the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) policy. In senior cycle classes, bullying is covered as part of the Politics and Society curriculum.
- The Students' Council play a key role in the College's Anti-Bullying Programme. Members of the Council undergo annual Anti-Bullying training and assist in creating visual display materials for the whole school.
- Non-teaching staff have an annual anti-bullying briefing.
- The school conducts an anti-bullying awareness program with Form II students through SPHE – this is derived from Dublin City University's *FUSE Anti-Bullying Program* which the school has joined.

(iv) Cyber-bullying – the school recognises that the evolution of modern communication technologies has led to an increase in this form of bullying compared to more traditional forms.

- Cyber-bullying is formally covered in Computer Studies classes in Forms I, II, III & IV.
- Form tutors address this topic with their students in Form assembly in accordance with the AUP policy and Social Media Policy.

- The school, in conjunction with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), organises yearly presentations for students and parents on a topic related to cyber-bullying.

(v) Homophobic & Transphobic bullying – the school promotes an education and awareness campaign regarding these issues.

- The College participates in the annual Stand Up Awareness Week, run by 'BeLonG To', which focuses on transphobic and homophobic bullying. This is a whole school initiative involving an education and awareness campaign, fundraising and the promotion of inclusion and celebration of diversity.
- SPHE classes for each year group cover the topics of sexual orientation and sexual identity in accordance with our RSE policy.

(vi) Bystander Responsibilities – the College recognises the role of the bystander in preventing or stopping bullying behaviour.

- Students & staff are explicitly taught about their responsibilities and powers as bystanders in a bullying situation. *(see Appendix 4)*
- The role of the bystander is highlighted in visual displays around the College campus.

(vii) Mentoring – the school recognises the importance of peer support to build a collaborative and caring school community.

- When students arrive in school for the first time they are usually nervous, excited, disorientated, confused and unsure of themselves. The mentor plays a vital role in helping them settle in successfully to their new environment.
- Each year transition year students are invited to apply to train as peer mentors for the following year. This acts to ease the transition from Primary school to Secondary school, thus supporting first year students as they establish familiarity with the new school environment.
- Sixth year prefects act as mentors to new students that arrive into other years.
- Students who act as mentors benefit by acknowledging their leadership responsibility and displaying kindness as they act as a positive role model.

(viii) Racist bullying – consistent with the school's inclusive Church of Ireland ethos, it is expected that all students to find Midleton College a safe and welcoming place where they are able to achieve success, irrespective of their nationality, or ethnic background.

- However, it is not possible to achieve this if any member of the College faces prejudice or hostility because of their race or ethnic origins. Every child has the right to learn; the right to be different; and the right to be happy.
- The College endeavours to become an environment that is actively *anti-racialist* or *anti-racist.*[3] All associated with the School are committed to dealing with incidents involving racism (including prejudice and stereotyping), racialist harassment, and name calling, in the event that such conduct might occur.
- A racist incident is behaviour or language that makes a person feel unwelcome or marginalised because of their colour, culture, religion, or national origin.
- Unacceptable racist acts include: physical assault or threats, inciting racism in others, expressing prejudices or deliberate misinformation on racial or ethnic distinctions distribution of racist materials, treating others less favourably on the basis of race, racist name-calling, racist joke-making or the use of racist language, refusal to cooperate with other people because of their ethnic origin, engaging in racist stereotyping. This list is not exhaustive.

The measures the school is taking in this regard include the following:

Recording

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[3] A notion that distinctive human characteristics are determined by race. '"racism" carries in itself the condemnation of what it means…Basically, racism lives in practice, not in theory'. *C.f.,* H.F Augstein, 'Racism', in *The Oxford Companion to the Body*, ed. Colin Blakemore and Sheila Jennett (Oxford University Press, 2003).

All disclosed incidents of racism are investigated and recorded as *per* the recording Sheet used in this policy; incidents are managed according to the *Code of Behaviour* and/or the *Anti-Bullying* policy as appropriate.

The number of bullying incidents – specifically involving racism bullying – will be reported separately to the Board of Management.

Student Focus Group

A yearly focus group on racism in the College is convened by the Principal or other nominated teacher and findings of this group are communicated to both staff and the Board of Management for consideration when reviewing the *Anti-Bullying* policy.

Staff CPD

Staff will continue to undergo CPD in the area of anti-racism. The Board of Management will give special consideration for courses in this area when allocating funding. All staff will be distributed copies of the Equality Authority document '*Equality in Second-level Schools: A Training Manual for Educators and Trainers*'.

Role Model

The College will seek opportunities to ensure that the role models visible to the students are reflective of diverse nature of our student body.

Curriculum

The school curriculum provides an opportunity for all to learn about racism and its effects. It additionally allows for students to learn the value of cultural diversity and understanding.

The relevant subjects include: CSPE, SPHE, Politics & Society, History, English and Religious Education.

In these subject areas the importance of reporting racist incidences and the role of bystanders will be emphasised. A discussion on the expectations around racism will form part of the induction of Form I students.

Consideration should be given to texts and resources used in class to ensure that they are culturally diverse and appropriate.

College Events

Midleton College will actively seek opportunities to raise awareness of cultural diversity and racism e.g.

- o European Anti-Racism week (March)
- o Black History Month (October)
- o Human Rights Day (10 December)
- o A Multicultural Day
- o Invite guest speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds and origins to serve as positive role models
- o Yellow Flag Programme

(viii) Sexual bullying – the Rape Crisis Network Ireland 2021 report *"Storm and Stress – An Exploration of Sexual Harassment Amongst Adolescents"* states that 80% of adolescents disclosed being

subjected to some form of sexual harassment, 24% being subjected to physical and extreme forms of sexual harassment[4].

- Sexual bullying can be viewed as incidents of unwanted sexual, verbal and nonverbal behaviours which draw on gender-based beliefs and sexist hostility. It can range from unwanted banter to uninvited sexual contact. It violates a person's dignity and creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the young person.

- There is a significant body of research that exists on the impacts of sexual harassment on adolescents, which include: low self-esteem, depression, suicidal ideation, eating disorders, panic attacks, self-harm, self-blame, problems in body image, loneliness, difficulties with sleep, academic under-performance, reduced feelings of academic competence, problems in school attendance and engagement, problems socialising, problems in regulating emotions.

- The ERSI 2020 document *"Talking about sex and sexual behaviour of young people in Ireland"* states that schools can potentially influence sexual behaviour in two ways: firstly, intentionally, through the provision of information and advice on sex as part of the school curriculum; and secondly, and more indirectly, through the way in which the school climate (that is, the nature of relationships between teachers and students and among students) and the network of peers can shape young people's sense of themselves and the behaviour in which they engage[5].

The measures the school is taking in this regard include the following:

Recording

All disclosed incidents of sexual harassment are investigated and recorded as per Recording Sheet used in this policy; incidents are managed according to the Code of Behaviour and/or the Anti-Bullying policy as appropriate.

RSE Program

Students are introduced to a concept of sexual bullying as defined above in SPHE, Wellbeing or Guidance. Specifically, the nature of *consent* will be discussed in these subjects.

Bystander Awareness

In Transition Year, students will undertake the Bystander Awareness course piloted in conjunction with University College Cork (UCC). This will deal with the role of the Bystander who witnesses sexual harassment or bullying.

Journal

A page specifically about *consent* will be developed for the TY & Homework Journals.

External Speakers

Students are given access to speakers who specifically deal with sexual bullying including the local Community Guard, Garda Youth Liaison and a speaker from the Rape Crisis centre.

Staff CPD

All SPHE teachers are given copies of the two documents mentioned above and supported in attending courses such as Bystander Awareness training or equivalent.

7. **The College'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:**

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[4] Michelle Walsh, *Storm and Stress: An Exploration of Sexual Harassment Amongst Adolescents* (Dublin: Rape Crisis Network, Ireland, 2021).
[5] Anne Nolan and Emer Smyth, *Talking about Sex and Sexual Behaviour of Young People in Ireland*, 2020.

The primary aim of the investigating teacher is the resolve any issues with the relationship between the parties involved. Students and parents are required to cooperate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring the relationships between the parties involved. (See *Appendix 2*, for advice on Best Practice when dealing with a possible Bullying Incident)

Teachers should take a calm, non-judgemental, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour. Incidents are generally 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 students concerned. Individual interviews would be conducted first; thereafter, those involved may be interviewed as a group. Written accounts may be sought from the parties involved and written accounts of interviews may be kept.

It is up to the relevant teacher to use his or her professional judgement as to whether bullying has occurred.

If bullying has not occurred, the relevant teacher must give the Deputy Principal or Principal a report in writing outlining the reason(s) why they adjudged bullying has not occurred.

If bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records and the recording template attached (*see Appendix 6*) must be used to record the behaviour. This must be given immediately to the Deputy Principal or Principal.

If it is determined that there has been bullying, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and the actions to be taken. The student who has engaged in bullying behaviour should also be informed how the behaviour constitutes bullying.

There may be situations where issues arise, which can be dealt with comprehensively in a pastoral manner without the express use of sanctions. This will typically involve a meeting with a teacher(s) or Guidance Counsellor or a series of meetings with the student(s) who has allegedly behaved in an unacceptable manner as well as a parent/guardian. Similarly, a series of meetings with the alleged victim and a parent/guardian will take place. Where wrongdoing has been agreed a progress plan setting out the changed behaviour which must be demonstrated and recognised by the relevant member(s) of staff over or within an agreed time period will be provided in writing – this should be provided to the Deputy Principal or Principal with the Recording Form (*see Appendix 6*).

In the event that a pastoral approach is unsuccessful and where an individual or group of individuals are found to have been bullying another person(s) their behaviour will be formally sanctioned. This may involve detention, Saturday detention, suspension from school and/or recommendation for expulsion to the Board of Management. The student(s) concerned will again be required to make specific changes to their behaviour within a specified time-frame which will be monitored and reviewed, typically by a Form Teacher or the Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal or Principal as appropriate.

The sanction applied to any student is a matter between the student, their parents and the school.

Where it is appropriate the College may seek the input of external professional resources such as independent counsellors or statutory professional agencies with extensive experience in the resolution of specific situations as appropriate.

Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties should be arranged with a view to bringing them together at an appropriate juncture.

In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, they should contact the Principal in writing.

Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.

In the event that a parent has exhausted the College's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the College must advise the parents/guardians of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

8. **The school's programme of support for working with students affected by bullying is as follows**:

Midleton College recognises a duty of care in such circumstances to those who are being bullied, to those who witness events as well as those engaged in such behaviour and as such, support should be offered to all students affected.

The school may utilise its Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain or other appropriate staff member to help the students concerned. If appropriate the College mentoring scheme may be used. It may be appropriate to help the students concerned integrate into extra-curricular activities or other social settings.

The College may also advise parents of the need for external support, seek advice or issue a report to Tusla or other statutory agencies as appropriate.

Serious instances of bullying, as determined by the Principal, should, in accordance with the DES "Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2017" be referred to Tusla, the Gardaí or other services as appropriate.[6]

9. **Reporting to Board of Management**

The Principal will report to the Board of Management at each meeting the number of recorded instances of bullying. They should also confirm the status of each of these cases – whether they have been dealt with or are in the process of being dealt with.

The College will also give the number of recorded racist incidents and whether these were considered as bullying. These reports will be considered during the annual review of the anti-bullying policy.

10. **Supervision and Monitoring of Students**

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.

11. **Prevention of Harassment**

The Board of Management confirms that the College will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of students or staff, or the harassment of students or staff on any of the following specified nine grounds, *viz.*, i. gender (including transgender), ii civil status, iii. family status, iv. sexual orientation, v. religion, vi. age, vii. disability, viii. and ix. membership of the Traveller Community.

12. This policy was first adopted by the Board of Management on 27th February 2017.

13. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once every school year – feedback will be sought from the teaching body, PTA and the Student Council. Written notification that the review has been completed, and the policy that emerges, will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the PTA and Student Council. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department of Education.

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[6] *C.f.,* www.education.ie for full details.

Signed: _____   Signed: _____
          Chairperson of Board of Management   Principal

Date: Date:

Reviewed November 2021
Date of next review: September 2022

Appendix 1   **Types of Bullying Behaviour**[7]

- **Harassment:** any form of unwanted conduct in relation to any of the nine grounds named in the equality legislation that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the victim. The nine grounds are gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community.

- **Sexual harassment:** any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for them.

- **Physical aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While students often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

- **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

- **Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the student in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the student or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore" (implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person; non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".

- **Cyber-bullying:** This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. It can include sending mean or abusive text messages/ making mean or abusive calls; posting mean/ abusive messages/comments on social networking sites/ online forums or changing details while pretending to be that person/ creating websites/ false social network accounts to make fun of another person; excluding people from 'friend' lists or blocking them for no apparent reason. Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

- **Name calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.

- **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a student's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

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[7] Taken from Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2013*

- **Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted student not delivering on the demand). A student may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

- **Homophobic/transphobic bullying:** Name calling e.g. gay, queer, lesbian, etc.; spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation; taunting a person of a different sexual orientation.

- **Racial bullying:** Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background.

- **Bullying of Special Educational Needs students:** Where students are treated less worthy as a result of their disability or special educational need.

It is important to realise that means of bullying are constantly changing and types of bullying behaviour can be expanded in light of the experience of the school community

Appendix 2   **Guidelines for Best Practice when dealing with a possible Bullying Incident[8]**

1. Interview the victim, alleged bully and any witnesses separately.
2. Try to ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the students interviewed, for example by texting or messaging. In particular, persons accused of bullying (or being accomplices of some sort) should be interviewed either in quick succession OR by separate people simultaneously. This is to pre-empt any collusion or 'synchronisation' of accounts. It is also essential because it will assist in identifying false accusations.
3. Use a room that allows you to interview in privacy. A witness is recommended for serious incidents.
4. Keep a written record – it may help to have a copy of the Recording Template available (*see Appendix 6*).
5. Avoid making premature assumptions. It is very important not to be judgemental at this stage and the presumption of innocence is crucial.
6. Be non-confrontational.
7. Encourage as complete a response as possible and give them the time to do so. Often a victim will withhold information because they worry that it may appear trivial, or because they are embarrassed by something that has been done to them.
8. Interview additional witnesses/bystanders for information and complete the report form (*see Appendix 6*) in the appropriate place.
9. Reiterate to witnesses that there are no innocent bystanders - they are all responsible if anyone is being bullied.
10. Listen carefully to all accounts - several students saying the same does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth, particularly if they have had an opportunity to discuss the incident in advance.
11. If the bullied student might have provoked the bullying incident, help them to understand how this might have happened. However, this must be handled with great care because the victim must never be made to feel that he/she is to blame.
12. Do not attach blame until your investigation is complete.

Talking to the alleged bully
1. Adopt a problem-solving approach which moves a bully on from justifying themselves. Ask the alleged bully to suggest ways in which the situation can be improved.
2. Invite them to go through the Charter and measure their behaviour against the requirements of the Charter (*see Appendix 5*).
3. Tell all students interviewed that they must not discuss the interview with other students (other than to acknowledge their wrongdoing), and that to do so will be considered to be a further breach of the rules. They are, however, to be encouraged to discuss anything with their parents and/or the relevant teacher.
4. Keep written records – it may help to have a copy of the Recording Template available (*see Appendix 6*).
5. If you are satisfied that bullying did take place, help the student to understand the consequences of their actions and warn them that there must be no further intimidation. Inform them calmly and clearly of the type of sanction to be used if the bullying is repeated.
6. Regardless of whether there is a decision to impose a sanction/punishment it is usually of immense value that the person(s) who bullied apologises to the victim or where appropriate writes a letter of apology to the victim. If there is more than one person responsible, then this needs to be handled with particular care so that it does not become a further opportunity to collude against the victim(s).
7. Try for reconciliation and a genuine apology from the student(s). Do not, however, force a face-to-face meeting. This must be the decision of the students and in particular that of the victim(s).
8. Realise that some students do not appreciate the distress they are causing and are not willing to change their behaviour.
9. Try to reach agreement on reasonable long-term behaviour.
10. Prepare the student who has bullied to face their peer group - discuss what they will say to others.

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[8] Drawn from the guidelines of the ISPCC and the NSPCC

Appendix 3   **Parental Guidance regarding Bullying**

1. Talk about bullying at home, and seek to ensure that your child understands that it is wrong to bully, or to be seen to support the bullying of another person by acting as a bystander in an incident.

2. Prepare your child for a time when they might be the target for bullying behaviour. As part of this, explore some of the reasons why someone may bully others.

3. Highlight that silence is the best friend of bullying and, therefore, the importance that is attached to letting someone know.

4. Teach your child the skills of assertiveness by modelling it at home. A willingness to listen before judging, rather than being reactive, coupled with learning to use the word 'I' is one of the secrets of assertive communication. For example, I want you to stop doing that. The assertive child will be able to: stand tall; maintain eye contact; and express him/ herself clearly and calmly.

5. Build empathy in your child, this has a key role to play in the prevention of bullying.

6. Remembering that no one is born with negative thoughts of themselves, work to raise your child's self-esteem. Recognise, praise and reward your child's effort as well as their successes. Give them responsibility; ask for their help and for their opinions. Take care that an emotional response to a situation doesn't lead to saying something to or about your child that criticises or belittles them.

7. A child's resilience and their sense of self-worth are closely aligned. Fostering resilience in your child will help them to deal well with negative situations.

8. Supporting your child in the development of strong friendships will also make them less vulnerable to bullying and rejection.

9. Encourage your child to participate in activities, sporting or otherwise, that have the capacity to provide opportunities for: personal achievement; confidence building; and the promotion of self-esteem and self-discipline.

10. Help your child to master the skills of mediation and conflict resolution.

11. Encourage your child to be a defender, to help someone when they are down and unable to help themselves.

12. One of the most important things that any parent can do in terms of countering bullying is to become acquainted with the signs and symptoms that can emerge in children or young people if they are being bullied or if they are bullying others. This will support identification of a bullying problem and, therefore, early intervention. Some possible indicators that your child is being bullied include: unexplained bruises and cuts; unexplained damage to clothing; signs of anxiety and distress; changes in mood or behaviour; deterioration in academic performance; a reluctance to go to school; additional requests for money or stealing money; damage to or loss of personal belongings; negative reactions, such as getting upset, when online, coming offline or viewing text messages.

13. Parents can play a huge role in preventing cyber-bullying. Although parents are often seen as digital immigrants and their children as digital natives, it is important that parents emphasise the importance of online responsibilities to their child, as it is in this area that the child's knowledge may be less extensive. Appropriate online behaviour is the same as appropriate behaviour in the 'real world'. It is also very important that parents let their child know that they can go to them for support if they are being bullied.

14. Teach your child to be respectful and responsible online. Children should be made aware of the consequences of cyber-bullying for all involved and to stop and think before they post online or send texts that may be deemed abusive or threatening. Explain that the things they do on their social media devices can have long-term consequences: both legal and psychological.

15. Parents should look out for opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills in this area e.g. attend school talks, avail of parenting courses.

16. Be aware of your child's Internet and mobile phone use so that you will recognise if they are the subject of, or involved in cyber-bullying. The main mobile operators in Ireland have produced a booklet to explain the additional features of modern mobile phones.

17. Familiarise yourself with online chat lingo.

18. Curtail the use of mobiles at bedtime. By removing the phone at bedtime, adults can help remove the risk of an impulsive decision or victimisation.

19. Irish mobile phone operators offer parents a "dual access" where both child and parent have access to the records held on the account. There are also parental controls available where certain services (such

as the Internet) can be limited. Parents should contact their operator to obtain more details about this service.

20. Mobile Minder is a service for android and smart phones. This service allows parents to monitor all contacts to and from their child's phone. Parents are alerted if text messages contained with words linked to cyber-bullying are received or sent.

21. Parents need to challenge the culture of 'continuous accesses to technology by setting a time in the evening when technology is turned off. Technology provides many advantages to us all, but parents need to limit the amount of control such devices take on our lives.

22. If your child is a victim of cyber-bullying, it is important to remind them that it is not their fault. So many students internalise what is being said about them and this can lead to long term problems. Encourage them to talk to you.

23. Although it is understandable that you may be reluctant to invade your child's private space, you should remember that this issue needs to take second place to the need to protect your child. Research indicates that parental guidance of Internet use increases the probability that adolescents will react to support victims of cyber-bullying. It is also important for you to use parental controls on your home computer.

Appendix 4   Bystander role in Bullying

Research over the past 30 years has looked at the part played by bystanders and their critical role in bullying and how to tackle it. The key relevant findings are:

- Bystanders play a key role in preventing or stopping bullying. They can intervene:
  - By discouraging the bully,
  - By defending the victim,
  - By redirecting the situation away from bullying
  - By getting help
  - By rallying support from peers to stand up against bullying
  - By reporting an incident to adults.
- 85% of bullying takes place with bystanders present; this includes incidents of cyber-bullying.
- The presence of bystanders who do <u>not</u> react adversely provides positive reinforcement to the person who is bullying and sends the message that bullying is acceptable.
- Nearly 60% of the time bullying will <u>stop in less than 10 seconds</u> when peers intervene.
- These conclusions show how vital it is that *all* of a community, but especially students (since most bullying occurs out of the sight of adults), understand their responsibilities and their power in preventing and tackling bullying.
- It is essential to dispel any notion that this amounts to 'telling tales' or that they will in any way suffer repercussions as a result.
- It is also worth noting that bystanders who do not intervene or who fail to report bullying often suffer negative consequences themselves. These may include:
  - Pressure to participate in the bullying;
  - Anxiety about speaking to anyone about the bullying
  - Feelings of powerlessness to stop bullying
  - Vulnerability to becoming victimised
  - Fear of associating with the victim, the bully, or the bully's friends
  - Guilt for not having defended the victim
- Empowering young people to act against incidents of bullying that they witness will:
  - Add to their self-esteem
  - Increase their sense of community
  - Add to the pride they feel as good, kind and respected members of that community, both at school and as they go out into the world.

MIDLETON COLLEGE ANTI-BULLYING CHARTER

BULLYING

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.

This includes relational bullying, cyber-bullying and identity based bullying.

Midleton College is an inclusive community, where all students are entitled to be respected and, equally are expected to respect others. Students, staff and parents work together to ensure that students learn in an atmosphere of care and support and be a school which does not tolerate bullying.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

I, along with ALL members of our School Community, have **a Duty and a Responsibility:**

- To create a positive school climate where I treat others with respect and kindness at all times.
- Not to hurt, harm, victimise or exclude others, and not to condone or ignore others who do so.
- To change my behaviour immediately if I display bullying of any kind.
- To prevent and report bullying in all its forms.
- To use technology appropriately and not in a way that hurts or harms others.
- To understand diversity and recognise that everyone should be treated with respect regardless of any differences.

I agree to uphold this Charter and to support others in doing the same:
Form Group_____

Form Teacher_____   Date_____

Midleton College Connolly St., Midleton, Co. Cork

1. Name of student of concern and form group

Name _____ Form_____

2. Student(s) engaged in possible bullying behaviour

Name	Form	Role *	Level of Involvement**

* E.g. leader/instigator, accomplice, enabler, bystander, defender etc. ** 5 = very involved, 1 = indirectly involved

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern:

_____

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression		Isolation/Exclusion		Cyber-bullying		Malicious Gossip	
Damage to Property		Name Calling		Intimidation		Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Gender	Faith	Disability/SEN related	Race	Sexual Orientation	Sexual Identity	Other

8. Description of bullying behaviour and its impact (including dates, personnel involved including bystanders)

Use additional sheet if required

9.   Details of actions taken

Victim	Bully	Bystanders	Other

Signed: _____ (Relevant Teacher)   **Date:** _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____
(all relevant notes should be copied and accompany this form)

Checklist	Yes/No
Is the same person(s) involved in previous cases?	
Have parents/guardians been informed?	
Has the Form Teacher been informed?	
Have each of the persons allegedly involved been spoken to individually?	
Have the persons allegedly involved been spoken to as a group? (not recommended until all alleged perpetrators have been spoken to individually)	
Has a follow-up date been fixed?	
Has a plan of action been organised with the victim and their parents/guardian?	
Has a plan of action been organised with the alleged perpetrator(s) and their parents/guardian?	
Are any relevant notes/other information attached to this report?	

Other Measures taken (if required)	Details – include dates
Referral to Guidance Counsellor	
Medical treatment	
Involvement of Gardaí	
Involvement of another external agency	
Other	

Details of other measures/action		
Person/body concerned:	Date of measure:	Details:

Any other outcomes/relevant action

Has there been any further allegations of bullying involving these students?   **YES / NO**

Signed_____ Date_____

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 College'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*?	
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 students?	
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?	

Signed _____   Date 22/11/21
       Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed _____   Date 22/11/21
       Principal

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