

Our Lady of Mercy College

Beaumont

Dublin 9



Anti Bullying Policy

(i) Anti-bullying Policy

Mission Statement

The core value of Our Lady of Mercy College Beaumont is respect for all and the nurturing of individual potential, academically, spiritually and culturally as a member of the school community and in the spirit of the Mercy Ethos.

Introductory Statement:

We in Our Lady of Mercy College, Beaumont believe that a whole school approach is needed in managing bullying. An Anti Bullying Programme is currently in operation in the school. The school prides itself in creating a positive school culture and climate which encourages respect, trust, care, consideration and support for others (appendix 1). This is seen in the respectful relationships across the entire school community. A collegial atmosphere is supported both in the classroom and outside the classroom through allowing time for tutor classes, encouragement and support for Student Council, Prefects and through activities which form part of school life such as sporting events, cultural day, market day, musical events, retreats, assemblies bonding and peer activities. Our school is an inclusive place where the voice of all is heard.

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 Our Lady of Mercy College has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.

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

- A positive school culture and climate which-
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- Effective leadership;
- A school-wide approach;
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

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

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. Once off incidents can also be seen as bullying, see below.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying
- cyber-bullying
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, sectarian bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

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

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

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

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* (appendix 2) and information on the indicators & impact of bullying behaviour is set out in section 3.2 (appendix 4).

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

Year Head in first instance with progression to Deputy Principal and Principal as necessary.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

Preventing Bullying Behaviour

(ii) Publishing and Publicising the Anti-Bullying Policy and an Anti-Bullying Code. The Anti Bullying Policy is given to all parents before their daughter commences in the school and published on the school website. An abridged version will be published in the school journal.

(ii) Supervision and Monitoring takes place before school, during morning break, in the student canteen at lunch-time and after school. All teaching and non teaching staff are aware of the importance of noting any unacceptable behaviour. The school operates a Prefect System where each class is assigned a prefect. Each class has a Student Council representative.

(iii) Inclusion in the Curriculum/SPHE/Tutor Class Cool School JC Lessons.

(iv) Involving Parents/Guardians and the wider community. Parents were involved in the drawing up of this policy and are kept informed of events through the Term Calendars.

(v) Friendship Week will take place yearly and students will be involved in structured activities.

(vi) The school has drawn up a Mobile Phone/Electronic Equipment Policy, Internet Usage Policy, Pastoral Care Policy.

Procedures for reporting incidents

Who to Tell? Tutor and Year Head.

Tell any staff member with whom the student feels comfortable.

Class Prefect.

Student Council Representative

How to Tell? Direct approach to teacher or student at an appropriate time, eg. after class.

Hand note up with homework.

Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.

Get a parent or friend to tell on your behalf by phoning the school and asking to speak to the Principal, Deputy Principal or Year Head.

Administer a confidential questionnaire twice yearly to all students.

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

Initial disclosure of bullying behaviour

- Teacher will speak to students separately and try to resolve the issue. Student may be asked to write their own account. Year Head will be informed. Teacher keeps a brief record (see appendix 3).
- Students will be talked to about the effects of their behaviour. Verbal warning will be given. School will seek verbal agreement re future behaviour.
- If appropriate a fair outcome will be outlined: e.g. an apology, return of property etc.
- Teacher will follow up progress with: victim and bully, bystanders or others involved.

Where bullying behaviour persists/serious incident of bullying.

- Year Head will investigate. Students may be asked to give written reports. Year head keeps a record.
- Serious talk with the student regarding behaviour and future behaviour.
- Parents are informed by the Year Head.
- Year Head follows up progress with victim and bully, bystanders or others involved.
- Parents/Guardians if called in sign a written agreement regarding future behaviour.
- Student(s) may be referred to school counsellor.
- Detention will be given as appropriate.
- Future behaviour will be monitored.
- Referral to child psychologist/Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer as appropriate.
- Contact may be made with other support agencies e.g. regarding anger management.

Where bullying behaviour persists/serious incident of bullying- Principal or Deputy Principal involved

- Parents and student meet with Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head.
- Detention / Suspension / other agreed sanction from school's Code of Behaviour will be imposed.
- Conditions set regarding student's future behaviour.
- Counselling offered.
- Referral to child psychologist/Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer.
- Contact with other support agencies e.g. re anger management
- The future of the student in the school may be considered.
- The incident may be referred to the Board of Management at the discretion of the Principal for suspension/expulsion.

Where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she determined that bullying behaviour occurred, a report must be written up using form in Appendix 5. This is then reported to the Board of Management.

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

Monitoring by Teachers/Tutor/Year Head.

Speaking with the school counsellor.

Dealing with issues through Tutor Class.

Referral to NEPS/ child psychology services.

Contact with other support agencies e.g. re anger management.

8.

(i) **Procedures for Student to Staff Bullying or Staff to Student Bullying**

Where there are disclosures of student to staff (or staff to student) bullying, these will be dealt with by the principal or deputy principal.

(ii) **Procedures for Staff to Staff Bullying**

Where there are disclosures of staff to staff bullying, these will be dealt with as per union agreed guidelines and /or the dignity in the Workplace policy.

(iii) **Procedures for Parent to Staff Bullying.**

The school has a Dignity at Work Policy and parents/guardians are expected to treat all staff with dignity. Staff will also treat parents likewise.

9. **Links to other Policies and Curriculum.**

This policy is drawn up and operated in conjunction with other policies ratified by the Board of Management. These are;

- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Mobile Phone/Electronic Equipment Policy
- Expulsion Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Internet Safety: Acceptable Use Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Guidance and Counselling Programme
- Admissions Policy
- Dignity in the Workplace
- Pastoral Care Policy.
- Substance Use Policy
- Relationships & Sexuality Education Policy
- SPHE Policy
- Faith Formation Policy

10. **Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

11. **Prevention of Harassment Dignity at Work Charter**

We commit ourselves to working together to maintain a workplace environment that encourages and supports the right to dignity at work for all staff. All who work here and have contact with the school are expected to respect the right of each individual to dignity in their working life. All will be treated equally and respected for their individuality and diversity. Bullying in any form is not accepted by us and will not be tolerated. Our policies and procedures underpin the principles and objectives of this Charter. Individuals who have contact with the school, parents, guardians, visitors have a duty and a responsibility to uphold this Dignity at Work Charter.

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

12. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on April 2nd 2014.

13. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Trustee if requested.

14. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website, readily available from school office on request and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Trustee and the Department.

Reviewed March 28th 2018

Date of next review: by May 2019

Appendix 1

Table A: Key elements of a positive school culture and climate

- The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
- The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
- The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
- The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.
- The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
- The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
- The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.
- The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.
- The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
- The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

Appendix 2

Section 2 Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Types of bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

Physical aggression: This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils 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 pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil 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 (girl or boy); 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. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). 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 pupil’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.

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

Appendix 3 School Report Sheet-Bullying Incident

Date	Students	Class

Reported by: _____ Reported to: _____

<p>Details:</p>	<p><i>Use overleaf if extra space needed</i></p>
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<p>Action Taken:</p>	<p><i>Use overleaf if extra space needed</i></p>
<p>Signed: _____ Principal/DP/Year Head/Tutor/Teacher</p>	<p>Date: _____</p>

<p>Monitoring:</p>	<p><i>Use overleaf if extra space needed</i></p>
<p>Signed : _____ Principal/DP/Year Head/Tutor/Teacher</p>	<p>Date: _____</p>

Appendix 4

Section 3.2 Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

IMPACT AND INDICATORS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Impacts of bullying behaviour

1. Pupils who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity, humiliation and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable. Self-confidence may be damaged with a consequent lowering of self-esteem. While they may not talk about what is happening to them, their suffering is indicated through changes in mood and behaviour. Extreme cases of bullying may result in suicide. It is, therefore, essential to be alert to changes in behaviour as early intervention can be very effective.
2. Pupils who witness bullying may also be affected and may suffer in similar ways to those who are bullied. For example, pupils who witness identity-based bullying and share that identity can experience anxiety and feel under threat themselves. Pupils can also feel guilt or distress at not being able to help the person being bullied.
3. There are also consequences for individuals who engage in bullying behaviour. Pupils who become involved in such behaviour can be at higher risk of depression. Other possible long-term consequences may include an increased risk of developing an anti-social personality, anxiety disorders, a likelihood of substance abuse and law-breaking behaviour in adulthood and decreased educational and occupational attainment.

The following signs and symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- (i) Anxiety about travelling to and from school e.g. requesting parents to drive or collect him/her, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school;
- (ii) Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, truancy;
- (iii) Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- (iv) Pattern of physical illnesses e.g. headaches, stomach aches;
- (v) Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays;
- (vi) Visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g. stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting;
- (vii) Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers;
- (viii) Possessions missing or damaged;
- (ix) Increased requests for money or stealing money;
- (x) Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing; and
- (xi) Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

There may be other signs depending on the individual and his/her circumstances. The above signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied but if repeated or occurring in combination, these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

Appendix 5 Template for recording bullying behaviour (report to the BOM)

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of Bullying concern/report

Tick relevant box(es)

Pupil concerned	
Other pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents.

Tick relevant box(es)

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

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

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

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

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller Community	Other (specify)

8. Brief description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Details of action taken

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Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____