Anti – Bullying Policy

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

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

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

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

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in this non-exhaustive definition of bullying:

- Pushing, tripping, bumping, taking or damaging property, mocking, taunting, pointing, name calling, spreading rumours, making threats, deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying.
- cyber-bullying (which is the abuse of one person or group of people by another person or group of people through the inappropriate use of social media eg. mobile phones, chat rooms, social networks such as Facebook, twitter etc.)
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

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

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

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

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

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

The relevant teacher responsible for investigating bullying behaviour will be decided upon on a case by case basis. However, it will involve the relevant Year Heads of the students involved, as well as the Principal and Deputy Principal.

All students involved will be interviewed with respect, where the details of the situation will be ascertained in a calm manner.

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):**

Every effort will be made at all times to educate the student body on what constitutes appropriate relational behaviour. This can take several forms. These include:

- Having a shared understanding for the whole school community that is clear on what bullying behaviour looks like.

- Creating a positive culture and climate that welcomes diversity and difference.

- Promoting a positive sense of self worth for students within the school environment.

- Informing individual students of appropriate behaviour when dealing with conflict among individuals or groups.

- Using Weekly Assemblies to highlight appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

- Informing students about the content of the school's Code of Behaviour.

- Having an active Pastoral Care Team and Year Head Group which identifies "at risk" students on a weekly basis.

- Teaching Religion classes where topics such as respect and human sexuality are covered.

- Integrating SPHE classes into the timetable where modules such as Belonging and Integrating, Communication, Conflict, Friendship, Personal Safety and Relationships (including LGBT) are discussed openly.

- Discussing the importance of respect for diversity in all subject areas.

- Organising an Awareness Week on Anti Bullying and Online Safety on a regular basis.

- Inviting relevant speakers to give presentations on age-appropriate topics to student groups eg homosexuality.

- Challenging students to be responsible for the safety and wellbeing of other students.

- Providing students with appropriate opportunities within a safe environment to report bullying eg. anonymous letter to Year Head at any time or using the "Resolution Post Box" on the lower ground floor.

- Working closely with Student Council and Buddies.

- Informing new students, their parents and new staff members of the school's Anti - Bullying policy.

- Promoting good home-school links.

- Encouraging students and parents to have an active role in preventing and addressing school-based bullying behaviour by reporting inappropriate behaviour.

- Effective monitoring and supervision of students.

- Encouraging ancillary staff to report inappropriate behaviour.

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

All reports of bullying including anonymous reports will be investigated. The school is mindful that bullying behaviour can be experienced at several different levels. Additional steps need to be taken when the inappropriate behaviour is deemed to be very serious.

In all cases, the teacher conducting the investigation will begin by recording the details given by the person who presents as being inappropriately treated. She / He will then speak to the student or students involved who have allegedly mistreated the student.

An arrangement will be put in place for the students involved to meet, if this is agreeable to both parties. It is important that the student who engaged in disrespectful and inappropriate behaviour hear the feelings of the student who has been mistreated. An apology needs to be offered and plans put in place for future behaviour between the students. A sanction may be given to the student who engaged in inappropriate behaviour at the discretion of the Principal.

Parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to explain the details of the incident, the support given by the school now and in the future and the sanctions imposed (if any).

In the case of more serious misbehaviour, where it is not possible to bring the parties together, sanctions (up to and including expulsion) will be given to students engaged in serious inappropriate behaviour. Pupils not directly involved in the situation may be asked to provide additional information if required.

Where a group is involved, each member of the group will be interviewed separately and will thereafter be interviewed as a group.

The aim of the relevant teacher investigating an incident in all cases of inappropriate behaviour is to resolve the issue and restore the relationship between the parties, rather than to apportion blame.

Support and follow up (as outlined below) will be arranged for all parties involved and their parents.

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):**

Students will be referred to the school's Guidance Counsellor as appropriate.

The Guidance Counsellor will provide a professional counselling service to a student who has experienced disrespect from another student in the school. They will be helped to deal with the issues arising from the incident(s). In addition, the Guidance Counsellor will work with the student to learn appropriate ways of protecting herself in the future. This includes learning about assertive behaviour, as well as confidence building.

Students who have been severely affected by a bullying incident(s) will be referred to an outside agency who may/may not be paid for, by the school to support the student professionally.

The Guidance Counsellor will also give support and help to the student involved in the bullying behaviour. This will include confidence building as well as healthy coping mechanisms. If deemed appropriate, the student may be referred to an outside agency who may/may not be paid for, by the school to support the student professionally.

8. **Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

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

9. **Prevention of Harassment**

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

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on **4th March 2014**

11. This policy will be 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 patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _Eilis McGrath_   Signed: _Ciarán Cooke_
Chairperson Board of Management   Principal

Date: 4th March 2014   Date: __4th March 2014

Reviewed: 21/04/15

Date of next review: **April 2016**

Appendix 2 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.

- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.

- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.

- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.

- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.

- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.

- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.

- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.

- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.

- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.

- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.

- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.

- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.

- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.

- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.

- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school.
  - o   Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
  - o   Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.

Support the establishment and work of student councils

Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour

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

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

9.   Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)   Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____
* Note: The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.

Appendix 4 Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?	
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 pupils?	
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, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date _____
Principal