



## **POLICY FOR ANTI-BULLYING**

### **Moville Community College Post-Primary School**

ETB schools are state, co-educational, multi-denominational schools underpinned by the core values of:

- Excellence in Education
  - Care
  - Equality
- Community
- Respect

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#### **Mission Statement**

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Moville Community College is a school where everybody is encouraged and expected to be the best that they can be.

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#### **Vision**

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Moville Community College is a second level school under the management of Donegal Education and Training Board. We provide a broad curriculum and a high quality education to learners in our community. We promote academic success and always recognise our students' achievements. Our staff, supported by parents, enable the students to develop the skills and attitudes necessary to become responsible young adults who contribute positively to society. We value mutual respect, tolerance and positive relationships. We celebrate diversity and we seek to

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foster a sense of belonging. We include all students in our school and we aim to create a safe and supportive learning environment for all.

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 and the Code of Behaviour Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board, the Board of Management of Moville Community College has adopted the following Anti-Bullying Policy as part of the school's overall Code of Behaviour. This policy complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* (09/13).
2. The Board of Management recognises the serious nature of bullying and the potential negative impact that it can have on the lives of students and is fully committed to the key principles of best practice in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour as outlined in this policy.
3. Moville Community College has a positive school culture and climate which:
  - Believes that every student has the right to feel safe and happy.
  - Is safeguarded by a Pastoral Care Team comprising the Principal, the Deputy Principal, Class Tutors, Year Coordinators, the Guidance Counsellor and the Home School Community Liaison Officer. Adequate supervisory and monitoring measures are also put in place throughout the day.
  - Is welcoming of diversity and is based on inclusivity.
  - Encourages students to disclose incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment.
  - Promotes respectful relationships across the school community.
4. Successful implementation of this policy depends on:
  - 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 students.
    - Explicitly address the issue of cyber-bullying and identity based bullying including, in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
  - Effective supervision and monitoring of students.
  - Supports for staff.
  - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour.
  - Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

All members of the school community are subject to this policy.

Some forms of bullying behaviour that break the law may be referred to the Gardai.

5. The policy will be applicable during the following periods:
  - School time (including break/lunch times).
  - Going to and from school.
  - School tours/trips.
  - Extra-curricular activities.



The school reserves the right to apply its Anti-Bullying Policy in respect of bullying behaviour that occurs at any location or activity, if in the opinion of the school management, the alleged behaviour has created a hostile environment at school for the victim(s). The school also reserves the right to apply its Anti-Bullying Policy if the behaviour materially or substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

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

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour either verbally, psychologically or physically, conducted by an individual or group against another person (s) and which is repeated over time. The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying.
- Cyber-bullying.
- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of a particular church or religion, 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.**



<b>Examples of Bullying Behaviours</b>	
<b>General</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.</li> <li>● Physical aggression</li> <li>● Damage to property</li> <li>● Name calling</li> <li>● Slagging</li> <li>● The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating or degrading another person</li> <li>● Graffiti</li> <li>● Extortion</li> <li>● Intimidation</li> <li>● Gestures</li> <li>● The “look”</li> <li>● Invasion of personal space</li> <li>● A combination of any of the types listed.</li> </ul>
<b>Cyber</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Denigration:</b> Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation</li> <li>● <b>Harassment:</b> Sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual</li> <li>● <b>Impersonation:</b> Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name</li> <li>● <b>Flaming:</b> Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</li> <li>● <b>Trickery:</b> Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online</li> <li>● <b>Outing:</b> Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</li> <li>● <b>Exclusion:</b> Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</li> <li>● <b>Cyber stalking:</b> On-going harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his / her safety               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Silent telephone / mobile phone call</li> <li>○ Abusive telephone / mobile phone calls</li> <li>○ Abusive text messages</li> <li>○ Abusive emails</li> <li>○ Abusive communication on any social network</li> <li>○ Abusive website comments / blogs / pictures</li> <li>○ Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Homophobic and Transphobic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation</li> <li>● Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation</li> <li>● Name calling e.g. gay, queer, lesbian and anti gay language eg those trainers are gay</li> <li>● Physical intimidation, threats or attacks</li> </ul>



<b>Racial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or Traveller background</li> </ul>
<b>Relational</b>	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malicious gossip</li> <li>• Isolation and / or exclusion</li> <li>• Spreading rumours</li> <li>• Breaking confidence</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwelcome sexual comments or touching</li> <li>• Harassment</li> </ul>

7. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying in Moville Community College is (are):

- The Class Tutor.
- The Year Coordinator.
- The Home School Community Liaison Officer (HSCL).
- The Guidance Counsellor.
- The Deputy Principal.
- The Principal.

The level of involvement of any of the above will depend on each individual incident.

It is important to note that all teachers have a responsibility to listen to a report of bullying and to ensure that it is passed on to the relevant teacher.

All teachers are responsible for creating a positive school culture.

8. 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 Moville Community College are:

- Code of Behaviour published on the school website.
- Assembly addresses by Principal and Deputy Principal / Affirmations
- Positive reinforcement of good behaviour – VSWare, diary
- Supervision – before school, after school and at break times
- SPHE, CSPE
- 2014-2016: Seven teachers trained in ‘Friends for Life’ Programme which builds resilience in students
- Implementation of ‘Friends for Life’ Programme
- Training provided to all staff in Restorative Practices
- Promotion of Restorative Practices when dealing with conflict
- Transfer Programme for 1st year students
- Mentoring Programme: 4<sup>th</sup> year students are paired with 1<sup>st</sup> year students to help them settle into Moville Community College and can help report bullying incidents to class tutors



- LGBT whole school approach including Q Mark Award Program which includes 'Stand Up! Awareness Week'
- 2013: All staff received two days of training on LGBT
- 2014: Past pupil gave a one hour in-service on 'Coming Out' to staff
- 2023: Whole staff training on LGBTQ+ Safe and Supportive School approach
- An LGBTQ+ Allies group meet regularly and are provided with an opportunity to state their experiences of school
- Cyber Bullying workshop by Donegal Youth Council for all 1<sup>st</sup> year students
- Promotion of an active Student Council
- Health Promoting Schools Committee
- Cycle against Suicide- "It's ok not to feel ok and it's absolutely ok to ask for help"

Initiatives that are being considered for implementation in future:

- Display of anti-bullying charter in a prominent place in the school
- Drop a note system once per term in tutor class
- Internet safety guidelines for students – Webwise ([www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie))
- Cyber bullying information for parents - Donegal Youth Information Service

**It is also important that parents and students play a role in supporting the school in the implementation of this policy.**

9. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by Moyville Community College for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour with an aim to resolve any issues and restore as far as is practicable the relationships of all the parties involved are as follows:

### **Procedure for Dealing with Bullying Behaviour**

#### **Step 1:**

- Relevant teacher(s) investigate the report – taking a 'No Blame Approach'.
- Find out facts – who, where, when.
- Interview all parties individually if possible.
  - Decide if the behaviour constitutes bullying in consultation with class tutor or year head.

#### **Step 2:**

If agreed that bullying has occurred:

- Record the incident in 'Bullying Report Form'.
- Try to resolve issue using Restorative Practice measures.
- If necessary apply appropriate sanction (see Code of Behaviour).
- Inform the parents of students involved.
- Involve guidance counsellor / care team as appropriate.
- File a copy of the 'Bullying Report Form' in each student's record in Principal's Office.

#### **Step 3:**

If bullying behaviour is repeated:

- Repeat the procedures in Step 2 (above).
- Ensure that the Principal and / or Deputy Principal are informed.

#### **Step 4:**

- If necessary, cases may be referred onto the National Educational Psychological Service, the Gardai or the Health Service Executive.



- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

### **Recording of Bullying Behaviour**

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher should keep appropriate written records which will assist his / her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his / her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
  - o Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased.
  - o Whether any issues and relationships between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable.
  - o Any negative feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.

**10.** Moyville Community Colleges' programme of support for working with students affected by bullying is as follows:

- Pastoral Care Team
- Class Teacher / Year Coordinator
- Restorative approach (where appropriate)
- Revisit topic of 'Bullying' through SPHE lesson
- Individual counselling where appropriate
- Referral to outside agencies where appropriate

### **11. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour.

### **12. 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 students or staff or the harassment of students 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.

**13.** This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_ [date].

**14.** 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 patron if requested.

**15.** 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 and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Department and to the patron.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_





## Appendix

### Checklist

The Board of Management 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.

Answer **Yes / No** to the questions below:

Has the Board formally adopted an Anti-Bullying Policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
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?	