St. Mary's Secondary School, Charleville
Our Community, Learning Together

St Mary's Secondary School 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 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.
   This policy was written in the context of our existing policies
      Code of Behaviour
      Child Protection
      Safeguarding Statement
      Internet Usage Policy etc.
   When renewing this policy due consideration has been given tto all aspects of the wellbeing of students in our school.

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 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; where all voices are heard in an environment of disclosure.
   ● Effective leadership;
   ● A proactive school-wide approach to foster an inclusive and respectful environment.
   ● 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 trans-phobic bullying.
   ● Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
   ● Support for staff; Continuous CPD e.g. Restorative Practice is encouraged.
   ● 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 conduct, 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, 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 additionall 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 4)

3.1   Cyberbullying

Social media technologies are defined as information communication technologies (ICT) such as the internet, digital media, mobile phones and other online technologies such as smartphones and devices.

Cyberbullying means any use of social media technologies (Eg text messages, group messaging services, instant messaging, personal websites, online personal polling websites, social media networks etc.) that seeks to undermine or humiliate a member/members of St Marys Secondary School Charleville community. This includes circulating or publishing through ICT, material recorded without consent for the purpose of undermining/damaging the professional/personal reputation of another person.

This policy also applies when a student engages in inappropriate use of social media, when not under the direct supervision of the school, where there is clear connection to St Marys Secondary School Charleville and /or a demonstrable impact on its aims, work, reputation and /or personnel.

Responsibility of Users of IT Devices (Mobile Phones Computers Laptops Cameras etc.)

1. Keep password secure and secret to protect account access.
2. Do not post sensitive information.
3. Do not retaliate to any incident. Seek support and advice rather than engaging with the perpetrator.
4. Report any incident to St Marys Secondary School Staff within a timely manner.
5. Retain any evidence of the incident - including text, communication via educational platforms eg Google Workspace, emails, voice mails, website or instant message. Do not delete texts or emails. Screenshots should be taken of messages or webpages and care should be taken to record the time date and address of the site.
6. The Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (2nd Edition 2016) states that "*Staff should ensure that any communication with students, colleagues, parents, school management and other   is appropriate, including communication via electronic media, such as email, texting and networking sites.*"

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

● All staff members are responsible for reporting incidents of bullying observed and recording bullying complaints.
● Class Teachers, Tutors, Year Heads, the Deputy Principal and the Principal may investigate incidents of bullying recorded/reported to them.
● The Guidance Counsellor will be involved/informed in certain cases that require specialised supportive intervention.

In line with Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post-Primary Schools, the education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and trans-phobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

● A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
● The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities.
● Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it – prevention and intervention.
● Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, yard, tours and extra-curricular activities.
● Student support activities that help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer - respect and support, e.g. Student Council.
● The school's Anti-Bullying Policy is discussed with pupils and parents/guardians are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school.
● The school encourages a culture of disclosure. .
● An Acceptable Use Policy in the school ensures that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.
● The implementation of the SPHE and CSPE curricula.
● School policies relevant to bullying e.g. Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, Attendance, Sporting Activities.

In line with Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post-Primary Schools, 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:

6.   Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

- **The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);**
- Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the school.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to school management.

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher concerned will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;
- The school will take a calm, rational, problem-solving approach.
- Where possible, incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. The school recognises that pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the school will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- Each member will be interviewed by a teacher and/or member of management. Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher. **Those involved may also be asked to write down their account of the incident(s).**
- In cases where it has been determined by the school that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school will give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
- Where the school has determined that a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to her how she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- It will also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school;

Follow up and recording

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the school will take the following factors into account:
- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
- Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
- Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
- Any feedback received from parties involved, their parent(s) or School Management.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman

for Pupils.

7. Recording of Bullying Behaviour
- The school recognises the importance of all recording of bullying incidents being done so in an objective and factual manner. **The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:**

   Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred.
   - All staff will keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents will be reported to the relevant Class Teacher and Year Head.
   - While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the school, a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved, regarding same, will be kept on file.
   - The Class Teacher/Year Head will inform the Principal of all incidents being investigated.
   Informal-determination that bullying has occurred
   - If it is established by the school that bullying has occurred, appropriate written records will be kept which will assist in efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
   - The school has a protocol for the storage of all records retained.
   Formal-Appendix 1 (From DES Procedures)
   - Teachers will use the recording template at **Appendix 1** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
   - In cases where the school considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after it has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and
   - Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.
   - When the recording template is used, it will be retained by the school and a copy maintained by the Principal in the student filing system.
   Established intervention strategies
   - Teacher interviews with all pupils
   - Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
   - Working with parent(s)/guardian(s)s to support school interventions
   - No Blame Approach
   - Circle Time
   - Restorative interviews
   - Restorative conferencing

8. In accordance with Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, the school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:
   All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills, and build resilience such as:
   - Pastoral Care System
   - Class Teacher/Year Head System
   - Care Team/Student Support System
   - Group-work
   If pupils require counselling or further support the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise the same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

*Pupils should understand there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher. Note is made here of the **Bystander Intervention Programme***

9. 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.

10 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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on

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

Signature of Principal: Date: 24-10-22

Signature of Chair: Date: 24-10-22

Date of next review: August 2023

Appendix 1 - Strategies To Promote A Positive Culture in St Marys
St Marys Secondary School Mission Statement
The aim of St. Mary's Secondary School is to provide holistic education, in the catholic tradition, for all our students. We are committed to the academic, creative, emotional, spiritual and physical development of each student, in a caring and safe environment.

Our mission statement points very clearly to student care. Our whole school community is respectful where we as carers and learners create a positive environment for our students to flourish. We have rights as carers and learners but we also have responsibilities.

We welcome all our students' individuality and strive for each one to reach their full potential. Respect is central to our community and reiterated in everything we do. We enjoy mutually respectful relationships between students and teachers as documented by our MLL 2020.

We remind staff "To Model The Behaviour We Expect" and therefore enjoy a very connected respected student body. We encourage students to carry out a "Random Act of Kindness" and to acknowledge others, e.g. our Ancillary staff. We are consistent in our behaviour. We promote student responsibility and celebrate achievement, both in and out of school. We acknowledge and praise the student body both verbally and otherwise.

Please see the following that promotes our positive culture across our school community

Year	Actions	SPHE Curriculum	Other Areas of Curriculum
Junior Cycle	Buddy System Positive Comment in Journal Classroom Rules Classroom Messages Pre Covid Rotate Seating Stamps in Journal Verbal Praise Nurture For WellBeing Programme **Book - My Life** **Mental Health Day** **"Follow Your Dreams But Look Out For Others On The Way"**		Student Display of Work Casting Positive Respectful Interactions High Expectations Maths Trail MFL days
Fourth Year	Buddy System Positive Comment in Journal Classroom Rules Classroom Messages Pre Covid **Book - It's Your WellBeing** **Minding Each Other**	RSE Anti bullying , Understanding Difference and Stereotyping, Gender Studies.	
Senior Cycle	Positive Comment in Journal Classroom Rules Classroom Messages Pre Covid Connect with Respect Minding Each Other	RSE	RCSI.ie Course

Controls	Actions
Student Council	Work of Student Council is valued and supported eg Sensory Garden & Trousers Christmas Decoration of Rooms - Theme of Inclusivity Survey- mental health day Wellbeing Garden Day Fri week Halloween Dress Up Positivity & Mutual Respect
Staff Supervision	At All Breaks CCTV
Online Safety	At Assemblies Garda Presentation Webwise THINK - YSI Internet Safety Day Zeeko Presentations Digital Media Literacy Classes
Assemblies	Positive Reinforcement Student Achievement Acknowledgement
Code Of Behaviour	Breaches are investigated and sanctions given if necessary.
Weeks	Annual Anti Bullying Week Annual Stand Up Awareness Wellbeing Week
Parents Association	Regular Meetings - Zoom
BOM	Zoom
SST	Student Year Head Meetings At SPHE Year Head Meetings Parent - Year Head Meetings Phone & Email
Whole Staff	CPD - Anti Bullying Procedures SPHE - Tutors & Year Heads Pat Courtney - Sept 2020 www.sphe.ie www.pdst.ie www.webwise.ie webinars www.rcsi.ie online course
Noticeboard	Multicultural Community Anti Bullying
Annual Awards Day	More Than Academic Student Leadership Chef of the Year etc
School Tour Wellbeing Days	National & International

MMT	Check ins at assembly One to one check ins Greetings on corridors, outside of class etc Substitution of classes
SMT	Supervision and substitution Meeting individual students Tea & Chocolate/Scone Personable Interactions High Expectations Modelling & Caring - Appropriate Behaviour and Skills