



St. Mogue's College

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Introduction

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 (NEWB), the Board of Management of St. Mogue's 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 by the Department of Education & Skills (DES Procedures September 2013).

This policy includes bullying that is either perpetrated by students or experienced by students in the School.

The Board of Management (BOM) of St. Mogue's College has adopted the DES Procedures as the basis for the way in which the St. Mogue's College community addresses the issue of bullying.

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

3. The BOM supports and encourages the development of a positive School structure and climate which

- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
- encourages students and staff to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community

4. This is achieved through

- Effective leadership and a whole school approach
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) which build empathy, respect and resilience in students and which also explicitly address the issues 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 (including use of established intervention strategies)
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

2. Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- Address the issue of bullying in a firm and positive manner through a range of measures and strategies which will enable all members of the school community to deal effectively with bullying behaviour
- Raise awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour and to establish a high degree of collective vigilance
- Create an atmosphere of openness which encourages subjects of bullying behaviour to report and talk about their experience
- Ensure that there is no ambivalence regarding the rights of each student to a safe and secure learning environment
- Ensure that each member of the school community recognises his/her responsibility to achieve these aims.

3. Objectives

- That pupils, staff, parents, and visitors will treat one another fairly and their belongings with respect
- That bullying behaviour will not be tolerated in St. Mogues College
- That people feel safe and are able to report bullying without concern for consequences
- That people stand up for and support each other
- To put in place a procedure for noting, reporting, investigating, and responding to incidents of bullying
- To outline symptoms of bullying and prevention strategies
- That the initiatives undertaken at St. Mogues College be clearly outlined.

4. Definition of Bullying

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. (DES guidelines 2013)

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social media network or 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.

5. Education and prevention strategies to combat bullying – Section 6.5 of [DES Procedures](#)

- 5.1 St. Mogues College will adopt a whole-school approach (involving management, staff, parents, students and members of the wider community with a connection to the School) to prevent and combat bullying. St. Mogues College is committed to engaging with parents. All stakeholders will be involved in the ongoing development of policies and practices to combat bullying. In this regard, it is important that parents realise that **anyone can be a bully and anyone can be a target of bullying**. It is not just other people's sons and daughters who can bully. Here, also, it is important to realise that disagreements between young people are part and parcel of negotiating the road to adulthood and that **every youthful disagreement should not be treated as a full-blown bullying episode**.
- 5.2 St. Mogues College makes it clear to all members of the school community that bullying of any kind is unacceptable, irrespective of whether it is a student, a staff member or any other person that is the subject of such behaviour. In this context, all members of the school community have a duty to bring to the attention of the Principal or Deputy Principal any incident of cyberbullying or harassment that they know about or suspect.
- 5.3 The primary focus of the school, when investigating and dealing with bullying, is on resolving differences and restoring as far as is practicable, the relationships between the parties involved. The school however may take such disciplinary action as is necessary up to and including suspension and expulsion in accordance with its anti-bullying procedures and the School's Student Code of Behaviour.
- 5.4 The prevention and awareness of bullying is integral to this policy and students through their curricular and extra-curricular programmes, will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.
- 5.5 The focus of the school's prevention strategy is to build empathy, respect and resilience in students.
- 5.6 Students will be provided with opportunities to understand the causes and effects of bullying. It is recognised that there is potential within the teaching of all subjects and within extracurricular activities to foster an attitude of respect for all, to promote the value of diversity, to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. The school's Social, Personal and Health education (SPHE) curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The School's Relationship and Sexuality Educational (RSE) programme provides opportunities to explore and

discuss areas such as human sexuality and relationships which have particular relevance to identity based bullying, in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying. The school will make every reasonable effort to ensure that the full potential of these programmes is exploited in its efforts to combat bullying.

- 5.7 Prevention and awareness-raising measures will also deal explicitly with cyber-bullying through educating students about appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also through developing a culture of reporting any concerns about or incidents of bullying to a member of the teaching staff.
- 5.8 St. Mogues College will make every effort to highlight the importance of students reporting incidents or concerns about bullying to a member of the teaching staff on the clear understanding that these matters are being reported in confidence. This means that, as far as possible, a student who draws concerns about bullying to the attention of a member of staff will not have his/her identity divulged. More than anything else, the combating of bullying will depend on the extent to which students report bullying. In this context, the well-being of students is very much dependent on the vigilance of their fellow students and their preparedness to report concerns about bullying to the teaching staff and/or school management. The teaching staff is encouraged to reinforce this point to students on an ongoing basis.
- 5.9 In accordance with 6.8.9 of the DES Procedures parents and students are expected 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'.
- 5.10 All non-teaching staff such as clerical and administrative staff, personal study supervisors, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners, sports' coaches, those organising extracurricular activities and those driving school buses will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to either a teacher or the principal or deputy principal.
- 5.11 Where necessary St. Mogues College will seek the assistance of and work with the National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS), the HSE and the Gardaí, as appropriate, to combat bullying.
- 5.12 In combating bullying, St. Mogues College takes particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with Special Educational Needs (SEN). This will involve continued focus on inclusion and on developing social skills. The school pays particular attention to student induction and cultivating a school culture that respects everyone and values helping one another.

- 5.13 St. Mogues College will provide time during selected staff development sessions for the revaluation and discussion of the school's anti-bullying policy. This will enable all staff, teachers, and non-teaching staff to implement the policy consistently and effectively.
- 5.14 St. Mogues College SPHE programme will address the issue of bullying with each year group, each school year.
- 5.15 When investigating incidents it will be made clear to students in all years that when they report bullying behaviour they are not considered to be 'telling tales' but are behaving responsibly and that the well-being of other students is dependent on them reporting such behaviour to a teacher or to a senior student.
- 6.16 Each year the school will hold a Safe Internet Awareness day and an Anti-bullying awareness week to highlight the whole issue of bullying and staying safe while using modern technology.

6. On-going Initiatives at St. Mogues College

An anti-bullying week is organised for 1st year students annually which includes classes and team building activities

Students and parents are informed about the 'Cool Schools' Anti-Bullying Programme. All first-year students participate in the 'Cool Schools Programme'

First Years students are given confidential questionnaires on bullying behaviour

Tutors and teachers are supported in monitoring their classes and identifying bullying behaviours

All class Tutors cover the issue of bullying in the SPHE Curriculum

Teachers monitor all areas of the school during break and lunch times

The Transition Year Student Mentors support the 1st year students and pass on any disclosures of bullying to Year Heads, Tutors

Anti-Bullying posters are displayed around the school

Promotion of 'Stand up' week in support of LGBT young people through classes and events

Cyber-bullying is addressed in detail in the 'Annual Internet Safety Week'

Extended assemblies and Tutor lessons on Bullying

Issues of bullying are also addressed in Civic, Social and Political education (CSPE), Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), Life Skills and in the Religion curriculum

Regular re-enforcement of the School's anti-bullying expectations and procedures by Year Heads

7. Procedures for Reporting an incident of Bullying

Relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying

Students, parents, non-teaching staff or members of the wider community should feel welcome to report their concerns to any member of the teaching staff – including the Deputy Principal and/or the Principal. In this regard, any member of the teaching staff is deemed to be a relevant teacher in the context of Section 6.8.3 of the DES Procedures.

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying in St Mogue's College are the Year Heads of the group or groups involved. In some cases, the Guidance Counsellor and Deputy Principal may investigate incidents of bullying behaviour. The teacher to whom the incident is initially reported should record the information on the School anti bullying form and then pass this to the Year Head as soon as possible. The teacher or Year Head may request the support of the Guidance Counsellor if they feel it is appropriate.

8. Procedures for investigating, following up and recording of bullying behaviour and intervention strategies used by the School for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

At St Mogue's College we are committed to dealing with any reported incident of bullying behaviour in a fair, consistent and pastoral manner. In developing our procedure to deal with reports of bullying behaviour it has been custom and practice in our school that our Year Heads would be best suited to overseeing, investigating, and intervening in such behaviour occurring within their year groups. Each Year Head builds strong relationships with his/her year group and is aware of their needs and personalities. The Year Head's priority is to resolve the situation rather than assign blame.

Where a member of the teaching staff has a concern about a student being bullied, s/he should record the issue and report it to the Year Head who will investigate and deal with the matter. Alternatively, the teacher may refer the matter to the Deputy Principal or Principal.

(i) Investigating an incident of bullying

St Mogue's College will investigate all allegations of bullying and will take disciplinary action where necessary even when the bullying acts are committed outside of the school, if they impinge on the work or wellbeing of a student in the school.

St Mogue's College in accordance with Section 6.3.5 of the DES Procedures to seek the assistance of agencies such as NEPS, the HSE, and the Gardaí, where it deems such assistance is necessary to deal effectively with bullying behaviour. Where the school deems bullying behaviour to be potentially abusive (see

sections 6.8.12, 6.8.13 and 6.8.14 of the DES Procedures) it will consult with the HSE's Children and Family Services to assist it in drawing up an appropriate response or to obtain advice or to make a formal child protection report to the HSE or the Gardaí (as appropriate) in accordance with the DES Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.

Concerns or allegations of bullying will be investigated and addressed in accordance with Section 6.8.9 of the DES Procedures. These are summarised as follows

In investigating and dealing with bullying the focus will be on resolving the interpersonal issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved - rather than apportioning blame. Parent and pupils are required to assist the school by co-operating with any investigation

In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant Year Head will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved

Incidents of bullying will be investigated in a calm, unemotional problem-solving manner

Incidents of bullying will generally be investigated outside of the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved

All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard for the rights of students, irrespective of whether they are allegedly involved in bullying behaviour or in a position to provide information about the behaviour being investigated

Those investigating bullying behaviour, calmly will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why

Where deemed appropriate, those being interviewed may be asked to write down their account of what happened

In accordance with 6.8.9 of the DES Procedures parents and students are expected 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

Where the Year Head investigating a bullying issue determines that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the School

Where the Year Head determines that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and **every reasonable effort** will be made to try to

get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the student/s being bullied

Where the school deems it necessary to impose disciplinary sanctions, it will be made clear to all involved (both the bullied and those doing the bullying and their parents) that this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, his/her parents and the school

As a follow up to a bullying issue being resolved, the relevant teacher should meet separately with the relevant parties to review progress. Subsequently, but only if the student who has been bullied is ready and agreeable, consideration should be given to meeting with both parties simultaneously as this can have a therapeutic effect

Where the Year Head considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days the incident must be reported to the Deputy Principal/Principal

Furthermore, repeated incidents of bullying of a particular student over a period of time should be brought to the attention of the Deputy Principal/Principal Henceforth the management will work together with the Year Head to put a strategy in place to further deal with the case

Continuous or extremely severe incidents must be referred to the Deputy Principal/Principal who will address the situation in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy and Code of Discipline

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the Year Head must, as part of his/her professional judgement, 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 and any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents and the school

The parties involved in the bullying incidents will be advised not to discuss the same with their friends or other students in such a way as to inflame the incident and as a result to make matters worse for any party involved.

9. Recording incidents

Students are encouraged to tell any adult whom they know or trust. This adult should listen carefully and record (in a factual way) what the student has told them

This record should be passed to the Year Head as soon as possible

Year Heads keep records

Appendix one should be completed at the earliest possible opportunity

All records should be kept in a secure location of the Year Heads choosing for example the filing cabinet and a copy should be placed in each student's file

These records should remain confidential

Records should be kept for at least the duration of the child's school career

The following members of staff should have access to these records

Principal and Deputy Principal

Guidance counsellor

10. Right of Appeal

Where the parents/guardians of a student or a student of 18 years or more are not satisfied that the School has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with its own policy and/or the DES Procedures, they will be advised their right to make an appeal to the School. Such appeals shall be submitted, in writing to the school as soon as possible following the appellants informing the Principal that they are of the opinion that the school had not followed its own policy and/or the DES Procedures

Following an unsuccessful or unsatisfactory outcome of the appeal to the school, the appellants will be advised of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

11. A Year Head may select from any or all of the following actions in support of all students affected by bullying:

Open discussion with persons involved in respect of the behaviour giving due consideration to the wishes of the person being bullied. The aim of this discussion is to arrive at an agreement which is mutually acceptable to all parties

Possible involvement of other services within the school e.g. Guidance or HSCL

Seek support of a pastoral nature from Tutor, and other staff

Educate the class or year group and seek its support in combating the type of bullying which has occurred by addressing the issues with them

Inform and involve parents having determined that behaviour of a bullying nature has occurred

Mediation/restorative practices

Referral of students to outside agencies

Disciplinary action where appropriate in accordance with the school's code of discipline

It may be both useful and necessary to explain to some students the difference between “ignoring” and “not being friends” as well as the importance of respecting all members of the school community

Programme of support for working with students affected by bullying

The School will put in place a programme of supports for **ALL** students who have been affected by bullying. This programme may involve:

Offering appropriate counselling

- Providing opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their social skills and to build their resilience
- Providing students with appropriate opportunities to build their self-esteem and feelings of self-worth
- Encouraging students who have observed incidents of bullying behaviour to discuss them with their teachers and their parents and to avail of counselling where they feel it may assist them to cope effectively with what they have experienced
- Providing counselling for those who bully to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

12. Supervision and Monitoring of Anti-Bullying Procedures in St. Mogue’s College

The school confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible

- The implementation and effectiveness of the school’s anti-bullying policy will be an agenda item for staff meetings as required – so the concerns about the policy and/or the welfare of individual students can be shared and effectively addressed. Bullying issues will be regularly addressed at middle management meetings
- Data gathered through the reporting templates will be collated annually with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour and identifying issues requiring attention. This analysis will complement the information gathered through the bullying surveys
- At least once in every school term, the Principal will provide a report to the BOM setting out the following:
- The overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template since the previous report to the Board
 - Confirmation that all such cases referred via the recording template have been or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school’s anti-bullying policy and the DES Procedures

- The Principal's report will be included in the minutes of the Board's meeting but the students involved will not be identified.

13. Prevention of Harassment

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.

14. Policy Adoption and Review

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on

15. Policy Dissemination and Publication

This policy will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and awareness made of its availability to the Parent School Association.

16. Policy Review

- The school will undertake an annual review of the School's anti-bullying policy and its implementation in accordance with the procedures set out in Section 7.2 of the DES Procedures
- The school will ensure that an action plan is put in place to address any areas for improvement identified by the annual review
- Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and awareness made of its availability to the Parent School Association
- Details of the review and any decision resulting will be recorded in the Board's minutes and will be made available to the Patron and the DES.