Anti-Bullying Policy
(as incorporated into the Code of Behaviour)

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Scope of Policy

This policy applies to the whole school community in their relationships with students – students, teachers, management, Board of management, parents, office, and all ancillary staff.

Rationale

1. Department of Education and Skills requires schools to have a written policy on anti-bullying
2. The Trustees have a statutory obligation to ensure that a policy is in place that reflects the principles and values of the religious and educational philosophy of the school.
3. Involving and encouraging all members of the school community in developing, formulating and reviewing this policy on bullying promotes partnership, ownership and implementation of a living policy.

Links to Ethos

"From the inspiration of Nano Nagle who founded the school, and from the Presentation Sisters/CEIST which supported, enabled and still governs the school, we have inherited our commitment:

- to learn to think independently,
- to tolerate and value diversity,
- to respect ourselves and each other, and
- to be responsible for ourselves and to society.

Objective

 "We aspire to fulfil this commitment by fostering an atmosphere of respect, understanding, and encouragement between all who teach, work and learn in the School, so that the development and contribution of every individual can be acknowledged, and all can work together to benefit personal growth and the common good."

Belief Statement

The Anti-Bullying policy of St. Mary's High School has been formulated in accordance with the religious and educational philosophy of CEIST.

CEIST schools promote the development of a community of faith inspired by Gospel values. The community of the school works in a holistic manner to ensure that dependence is gradually replaced by responsibility for self, society and the world. The dignity of each student, staff member and parent is honoured and reflected in school policies and structures, including this policy. While educational excellence is promoted, it is the needs of the learner that direct the development of the school. Where possible schools are encouraged to engage with alternative approaches to education for those who are most disadvantaged. The schools promote a spirit of service and care"

Mission Statement

St. Mary's High School, Midleton is an all-girls CEIST School that was founded to care for the poor and the disadvantaged in every sense and to give priority to religious and moral education.

In accordance with this tradition, it seeks to:

- provide a broad curriculum catering for the needs of all students and to prepare them for their role as citizens of Europe and the World.
- help each student achieve their full potential in academic, personal, social and moral development and to provide Pastoral Care and Remedial Education as required.
- foster the personal and professional growth of staff, reflecting change in society.
- Establish and welcome the investment of the total school community.
- agus chun ar n-oidhreacht, gur dluth chuid di ar gcredeamh agus beasa agus bealai ar dtire, a chur ar aghaidh.

St. Mary's High School is committed to:

- Witness of Gospel values
- Curriculum innovations
- Leisure education
- Media education
- Civil, social and political education
- Social, personal and health education
- Equality
- Respect for the environment

Operating Context

This policy operated within the context of;

- the parameters of the Department of Education and Skills regulations and Circulars.
- the rights of the patron as set out in the Education Act (1998).
- the religious and Education philosophy of CEIST schools.

The school supports the principles of:

- Inclusiveness.
- equality of access and participation in the school.
- parental choice.
- respect for diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life in society.

Policy Details

General Description

General details and information on the school are outlined in the St. Mary's High School website
www.stmarysmidleton.com

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of
    behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB/TUSLA, the Board of Management of St. Mary`s High
    School 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) 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;

    (b) Effective leadership

    (c) A school-wide approach

    (d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

    **(e) 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;

    (f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

    (g) Supports for staff

    **(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use
    of established intervention strategies); and**

    (i) 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:

What is Bullying

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 the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- 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.

What is not Bullying

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, <u>proven</u> placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum which results in or leads to an incident in the school may be regarded as bullying behaviour. Screen captures are not acceptable as proof of the existence or origin of any given post. Verification from the platform provider e.g. Facebook, Snapchat etc. confirming the existence and the origin (IP addresss) of the post are required in support of any allegation. School internet access is via NCTE as approved by the DoES. It is school policy to not to facilitate social network access on this feed (with the current exception of Twitter). Allegations of serious cyberbullying should in the first instance be referred to the relevant platform provider and/or the local community Garda if necessary. Given the proliferation of social platforms, the range of methods of masking identity and issues around teenagers have multiple and/or fake social media accounts the school does not have the resources and/or skills and/or required access privileges to investigate beyond reasonable doubt issues arising on social media platforms. Rather the school will implement an approach based on the Method of Common Concern/No Blame Approach which seeks to stop future incidents through a shared responsibility based on looking forward rather than back.

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):
    - Class Teacher
    - Year Head / TYO Co-ordinator
    - Guidance Counsellor
    - Deputy Principal
    - Principal

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, 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*):

Sample Education and Prevention Strategies

<u>School Wide Approach</u>

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- 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.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be included in student journals and displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (every year)See the School Journal.
- The implementation of regular (e.g. per year/per term/per month/per week) whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Day and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; annual or term or monthly student surveys; regular school or year group assemblies by principal, deputy principal, year heads etc.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell e.g.
  o Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  o Hand note up with homework.

- o Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
- o Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
- Administer a confidential questionnaire once a term to all pupils.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. GLEN www.glen.ie, BeLonGTo www.belongto.org

Implementation of curricula
- The full implementation of the SPHE and CSPE curricula and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Cool School Lessons, #UP2US, Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme, On My Own Two Feet.
- School wide delivery of lessons on Relational aggression (Cool School Programme: A Friend in Deed), Cyber Bullying (#UP2US, Be Safe-Be Web wise, Think Before you Click, Let's Fight it Together, Web wise Primary teachers' resources), Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying (Growing up LGBT, Stand Up Programme, The Trust pack)Diversity and Interculturalism. The school should list every resource related to the SPHE curriculum, and make a list of supports.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary and post- primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- The school will implement the advice in "Sexual Orientation advice for schools" (RSE Primary, see booklet).

Links to other policies
Code of Behaviour, Child Protections Policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance, Sporting activities

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):

Primary Aim of Investigation

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);**

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach.

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, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. Anonymous reports must have sufficient detail and evidence to enable meaningful investigation. Anonymous reports which are maliciously motivated will not warrant investigation.
- 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 the relevant teacher;

Investigating and dealing with incidents

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant) teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;

Given that bullying is defined as repeated over time, a teacher who feels that an incident may fall into a pattern of ongoing behaviour should complete Form AB1 (yellow). Only when 3 AB1 forms have been logged will AB2 (orange) be issued and completed which formally acknowledges the behaviour as part of a pattern of bullying and reported the Board of Management. AB2 forms should be processed in co-operation with the relevant Year Head.

- 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;

- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.

- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;

- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;

- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;

• If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;

• Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;

It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

• In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should 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 should 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 relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to her how she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;

• It must 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, his or 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 relevant teacher must, as part of 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;
➢ Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s)s or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

• Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should 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) must 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 must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Pupils.

Recording of Bullying Behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

• All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher.

• While all reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same

• The relevant teacher must inform the principal/deputy principal of all incidents being investigated.

Form AB1 (Yellow) is provided for this purpose and stored in Year Heads' Office

• If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must 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.

• The school in consultation with the relevant teacher/s should develop a protocol for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher.

Form AB2 (Orange) is provided for this purpose and stored in Year Head's Office

The relevant teacher must use the recording template AB1 and/or AB2 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

a) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and

b) 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.

The school should list behaviours that must be recorded and reported immediately to the principal. These should be in line with the school's code of behaviour.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. Due consideration needs to be given to where these records are kept, who has access to them, and how long they will be retained. Decisions around record keeping should be noted in this policy.

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

- Implementing sociogram questionnaires

- Peer mediation where suitable training has been given

The Procedures mention the following intervention strategies and reference Ken Rigby;

www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/BullyingPreventionStrategiesinSchools Ken Rigby.pdf

- The traditional disciplinary approach

- Strengthening the victim

- Mediation

- Restorative Practice

- The Support Group Method

- The Method of Shared Concern

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows

(see Section 6.8.16 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools) :

- 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 e.g.

  – Pastoral care system

  – Buddy / Peer mentoring system

  – Tutor/Year head system

  – Care Team / Student Support Team

  – Group work such as circle time

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• If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

• Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

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.

The following Prompt Questions may be useful in considering this aspect of the policy:

• Are there agreed appropriate monitoring and supervision practices in the school?

• Have bullying danger spots been identified?

• Have parents and pupils been consulted in the identification of these danger spots?

• How will the student support/care structures (including year heads, class tutors, SPHE, Guidance, RE, CSPE, HSCL, Learning Support teachers) support measures to counteract bullying behaviour?

• How will pupils, in particular senior pupils, be involved as a resource to assist in counteracting bullying? In this regard, has a mentoring/buddy system been considered?

• How will the student council and school clubs be involved?

• In relation to Acceptable Use Policy in the school are the following issues addressed:

- Are all Internet sessions supervised by a teacher?
- Does the school regularly monitor pupils' Internet usage?
- Have pupils been instructed to use only approved class accounts for email purposes and to use these only under teacher supervision?
- Have pupils been instructed to access only those chat rooms, discussion forums and messaging or other electronic communication fora that have been approved by the school?

(Note that the Schools Broadband Programme has blocked all social networking sites on the basis that they waste time and take up too much of the bandwidth which is been provided for educational purposes only).

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 …………………………………….

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel (via the Intranet), 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 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.

Date:

Examples of bullying behaviours

The list of examples below is non exhaustive.

General behaviours which apply to all

- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.
- Physical aggression
- Damage to property
- Name calling
- Slagging
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
- Offensive graffiti
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Insulting or offensive gestures
- The "look"
- Invasion of personal space
- A combination of any of the types listed.

Cyber

- Denigration: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation
- Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual
- Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name
- Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight
- Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online
- Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images
- Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group
- Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety
- Silent telephone/mobile phone call
- Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive text messages
- Abusive email
- Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles
- Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures
- Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

Identity Based Behaviours

including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, ethnic background, membership of the Traveller community). Homophobic and Transgender

- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation
- Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian…used in a derogatory manner
- Physical intimidation or attacks
- Threats
- Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background
- Exclusion on the basis of any of the above

Relational

This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:

- Malicious gossip
- Isolation & exclusion
- Ignoring
- Excluding from the group
- Taking someone's friends away
- "Bitching"
- Spreading rumours
- Breaking confidence
- Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear
- The "look"
- Sexual
- Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching
- Harassment

Special Educational Needs or Disability

- Name calling
- Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs
- Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying
- Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.
- Mimicking a person's disability
- Setting others up for ridicule