***Anti-Bullying***

***Policy***

***For***

***Milltown National School***

**Milltown National School Anti-Bullying Policy**

**Aims of Anti-Bullying Policy;**

This Anti-Bullying Policy aims to produce a safe and caring environment in which all children can develop to their full potential.

The school does not tolerate or condone bullying of any form or at any level of the school community.

The Board of Management is committed to ensuring that all members of the school community - pupils, staff, and parents are enabled to act effectively to deal with bullying.

**Anti-Bullying and School’s Mission Statement**

Milltown National School promotes Gospel values in a Christian learning community where children can grow in knowledge and understanding and in the acquisition of skills, attitude and values.

We are fully committed to offering excellence in education by:

* Promoting the highest possible achievement for our pupils.
* Encouraging children to grow in the Catholic faith.
* Establishing the foundations for lifelong learning.
* Welcoming input from parents to complement the skills and experiences of our professional teaching staff.
* Ensuring that our school is central to the parish, reaching out to embrace the wider community.
* Uniting all staff, parents and B.O.M. in our aim to a leading school in the Diocese of Meath.

**Definition of Bullying :**

Bullying can be defined as the “calculated and repeated negative actions whether verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others.”

Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour will not be condoned. However, when the behaviour is calculated, systematic and on-going it is bullying. Bullying may take many different forms such as physical aggression, damage to property, theft of property, extortion, intimidation, abusive telephone calls, isolation, name calling, writing notes, emailing, texting or cyber-bullying. As a form of aggressive behaviour it is usually hurtful and deliberate. It is persistent over time and makes it difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

The most common forms of bullying are :

**Physical aggression** : pushing, shoving, kicking, hitting.

**Verbal :** name calling, teasing, insulting, humiliating, spreading mean, hurtful or untrue gossip or rumour about an individual.

**Non-Verbal** : making suggestive, provocative or intimidating gestures.

**Emotional** : making threats, excluding, isolating, ignoring etc.

Written and E-bullying : writing notes, sending threatening upsetting messages, images

**Personal Property** : interference or damage to clothing, school books or materials or other property.

**Policy Objectives**

By introducing this policy the school community hopes :

* To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and guardians.
* To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
* To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
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**Preventative Strategies**

* The School will foster an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance.
* Children’s self-esteem will be developed through celebrating individual differences, achievements, acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and manners and providing opportunities for success throughout the curriculum and school.
* Teachers will help children develop empathy by discussing feelings and trying to put themselves in the place of others.
* Children are made aware that bullying is an unacceptable form of behaviour. This is done explicitly through the Stay Safe Programme, the Walk Tall Programme. Opportunities also arise in Religion lessons and other subjects.
* Similarly the school’s code of behaviour emphasises the promotion of respectful behaviour.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

All members of the school community have a role to play in the prevention of bullying:

* Board of Management

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring that all members of the school community are enabled to deal effectively with bullying. The Board is committed to providing time and resources for the implementation of the policy. The Board will ensure that proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to prevent bullying and to deal with incidents appropriately as they arise.

* School Staff

The school staff will foster an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance.

Teachers will be vigilant, respond sensitively and caringly to pupils who disclose any incidence of bullying and investigate all disclosed incidents of bullying.

* Parents

Encourage positive behaviour and discourage negative behaviour both at home and at school.

Encourage children to share, to be kind, to be caring, and to be understanding towards others.

Watch out for signs and symptoms that your child is being bullied eg. Mood changes, deterioration of school work.

Discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with her/him.

Support the school in its efforts to prevent and treat bullying.

* Pupils

Pupils are expected to be tolerant and to have mutual respect for each other.

Pupils should report incidents of bullying to their parents and teachers.

* Curriculum

The formal curriculum of the school will also be used to educate all pupils with regards to bullying behaviour. Anti-bullying issues may be raised through the School’s Religious Programme, Social Personal and Health Education, Stay Safe Programme, Visual Arts and use of Circle Time.

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**Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Bullying Incidents**

Procedures for Parents who are reporting Bullying Incidents

1. Bullying incidents should be reported to the class teacher.
2. Timeframe to monitor situation agreed between class teacher and parent/guardian.
3. If problem persists specific incidents of bullying must be put in writing to facilitate further investigation by class teacher/school staff.
4. All reported incidents which are serious or are part of a pattern of behaviour will be noted, investigated and treated as circumstances require.
5. Class Teacher speaks with parents of all parties separately to whom details of allegations will be communicated.

When all stages outlined above are exhausted the following will apply.

1. Class Teacher will inform Principal.
2. A review of all recorded incidents of bullying takes place with Principal and Class Teacher.
3. Parents notified and interview with the parents is arranged by the class teacher

 and Principal.

1. If the problem persists the Principal will again make the parents aware of the

 Pupil’s recorded misbehaviour and the consequences of such

 continued behaviour.

1. If still no improvement, the Principal will acquaint the Chairperson of BOM

 of the problem.

1. Parents will be invited to a meeting of the BOM.
2. The BOM may deem it necessary to suspend that pupil for a specified period.
3. Expulsion will be considered in

 a. Extreme cases of bullying.

 b. Where all stages above have been exhausted.

**Success Criteria**

Indicators of success include:

* Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils. This may be monitored at staff meetings, parent/teacher meetings and in class discussion time.
* Observations of good behaviour in class, corridors and in the playground.
* Fewer incidents of bullying in the school.

 **Signed:** Father Fitzsimons

 Chairperson, Board of Management