



Anti-Bullying Policy

Version 2.0
September 2019

Document Version Control

Version	Date	Description
1.0	Nov 2015	Original Version
1.1	May 2016	Intervention procedure amended
2.0	September 2019	Complete revision

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 Glenstal Abbey 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.

The school seeks to provide a structure for daily living within which good behaviour is encouraged and supported. Furthermore, in accordance with St Benedict's injunction to the Abbot that he must 'adapt himself to a variety of characters', (*Rule of Benedict [RB] 2:31*), the school seeks to implement a fair and consistent, though suitably flexible, system of rewards and sanctions. Perpetrators of aggressive, intimidating or bullying behaviour may face strong sanctions. Yet, as St Benedict makes clear, the purpose of sanction is to bring about reform, and we take as our starting point his advice to the Abbot that he 'must hate faults but love the brothers' (*RB 64:11*), and that he must deal with those who are guilty of misdeeds 'so that they may be healed' (*RB:30:3*).

2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of members of the whole school community 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
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community
- Effective leadership
- 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 pupils
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
- 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.

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

Bullying is repeated 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
- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on ethnicity 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 Conduct.

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 Conduct.

4. The relevant staff members for investigating and dealing with bullying are:

- The Head of Boarding
- The Deputy Principal
- The Principal

5. 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 the school are as follows:

- Whole-School Assemblies
- Individual Assemblies for each year group at the beginning of each academic year
- Behaviour Contracts signed by all students at the beginning of each academic year
- Behaviour Statement displayed in all classrooms and teaching spaces
- Teaching about bullying during SPHE, Guidance, Wellbeing and Guidance classes
- Cross-curricular approaches to themes related to bullying and bullying prevention
- Discussions about bullying during Housemaster meetings with year groups
- Guest speakers and workshops for students, staff and parents

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:

A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher or housemaster in the school. Individual staff must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy. All suspected incidences of bullying behaviour should be reported to one of the relevant staff members listed at #4 above without delay.

Parents 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. It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand this approach from the outset.

When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant staff will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group.

In cases where it has been determined by the relevant staff 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 explain the actions being taken. The school will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils. Where the relevant staff have determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him how he is in breach of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and efforts will be made to try to get him to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied. If judged appropriate by the relevant staff, follow-up meetings with the parties involved may 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.

These interventions may also be accompanied by a disciplinary sanction, including appearance before a Disciplinary Committee and suspension, as provided for in the school's Discipline, Suspensions & Expulsions Policy. It must be understood clearly by all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his parents and the school.

While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant staff members, they will use their professional judgement in relation to the records to be made and retained of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same. If it is established that bullying has occurred, the relevant staff must keep appropriate written records which will assist their efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

The relevant staff must record all incidents of bullying behaviour using the template in Appendix 3 of the Department of Education and Skills' *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* (2013). The report must be completed in full and retained by the staff member in question and a copy provided to the Principal.

At least once in every school term, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported since the previous report to the Board and confirmation that all of these cases have been, or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and the relevant DES *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools*. The minutes of the Board of Management meeting will record the above but in doing so will not include any identifying details of the pupils involved.

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

- The management and staff in Glenstal Abbey School are very aware of the importance of catering for the needs and welfare of its student body. A programme of support for students who have been bullied is in place in the school so as to raise their self-esteem, develop their friendship, empathy and social skills and thereby develop their resilience and coping mechanism
- A programme of support for those students involved in bullying behaviour is also part of the school's intervention process as those involved in bullying may need assistance on an ongoing basis. It is recognised that students who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling and other supports to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others
- There are also opportunities for those who have observed bullying to discuss the situation with teachers
- There is a formal Pastoral Care Team in the school, which meets weekly, comprised of members of the School Executive, the Matron and members of the Boarding, Guidance Counselling, SPHE and Chaplaincy departments
- There is a formal Behaviour Team in the school, which meets weekly, comprised of the Principal, Junior and Senior Behaviour Deans and the Head of Extra-Curricular Activities
- Concerns about the welfare of students may arise at any time and in the course of the teaching of any subject but issues generally regarded as being sensitive for students are specifically addressed at the weekly meeting of the Pastoral Care Team
- The school also has a Student Council, comprising of students, elected by their peers, from each year group and this body meets on a regular basis to discuss issues of particular relevance to the lives of students in the school

8. 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.

9. 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 16th September 2019.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to parents and students. 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 notified to parents. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed *Alec Gabbett*
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed *Carmel Honan*
Principal

Date 16th September 2019

Date of next review: October 2020