

Mount Temple Anti-Bullying Policy

Revised: February 2021

1. In accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board, the Board of Management of Mount Temple Comprehensive School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy, within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy complies with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* published in 2013.

https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-for-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools.pdf

- 2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of the school community. The Board is committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour, to minimise risk, and where bullying has occurred, to ensure that the school works to support the best outcome for all concerned.
 - A positive school culture and climate which:
 - makes clear that all policies are based on the core ethos of Mount Temple, and that this ethos has at its core a set of values encapsulated in the slogan "All Different, All Equal", and makes decisions in reference to this core ethos;
 - o relates issues of identity to the core values: All Different, All Equal;
 - is informed by a Learning Policy which, based on Mount Temples core values, seeks to ensure that all that is taught and learned in Mount temple, in classrooms and corridors and on pitches and throughout school life, is consistent with these values that respect difference and celebrate diversity.
 - o welcomes difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - o encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment;
 - o 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:
 - o build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - o explicitly address cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying, including, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- Support for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- Ongoing 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 unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying;
- cyber-bullying; and
- identity-based bullying, such as homophobic or racist bullying, bullying based on membership of the Traveller community 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, are not bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, through the school's code of behaviour.

Placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum, where it can be viewed or repeated by other people, will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition will be dealt with through 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*.

 $\underline{https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-for-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools.pdf}$

4. Relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying

The relevant Year Head or Form Teacher is involved in the investigation of incidence of bullying. Where a teacher or student has a concern about bullying this can be brought in the first instance to the Form Teacher, and hence to the Year Head. The Year Head may involve Guidance Counsellors, Deputy Principals, or the Principal in the issue as appropriate. In certain circumstances the Principal may be compelled to bring issues of bullying to the attention of the Board of Management.

5.Education and prevention strategies used by Mount Temple (including strategies specifically for cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying, including homophobic and transphobic and racism bullying)

Mount Temple uses specific education and prevention strategies, including measure s taken by the school to address cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying, including homophobic and transphobic bullying. Effective practice includes prevention and awareness-raising measures across all aspects of bullying and involves strategies for pupils to address problems when they arise, e.g. strategies to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.

As self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour, Mount Temple, through classroom activities and extra-curricular programmes, gives pupils opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth. Student Council surveying of students monitors and confirms this.

Initiatives and programmes focused on developing pupils' awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects, will deal explicitly with identity-based bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying. For example LGBTQ+ posters on notice boards, discussions with parents about specific statements of welcome and respect for LGBTQ+ members of the school community, teaching the Social, Personal, Health Education (SPHE) resource, Growing Up LGBTQ+, and providing regular meetings of the LGBTQ+ Spectrum group in school are just some of the ways in which Mount Temple addresses homophobic and transphobic bullying.

Prevention and awareness-raising measures also deal explicitly with cyberbullying. The best way to address cyberbullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. Prevention and awareness-raising measures focus on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. (See Appendix 1) A schoolwide approach and the role of parents are important too. Mount Temple endeavours to provide regular information evenings for parents on this topic. The prevention and

awareness-raising measures consider the scope for cyber-bullying as a result of access to technology within the school. Students also sign the ICT acceptable usage policy.

Our approach to tackling and preventing bullying takes account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or additional educational needs. With other relevant school policies and supports, this ensures that all the services for these pupils work together. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with additional educational needs include improving inclusion, developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as moving from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture, with respect for all and helping one another as central.

Mount Temple's prevention and awareness-raising measures are proportionate and take account of the age and gender of the pupils involved. We work to raise awareness of bullying, so that all members of the school community understand what bullying is and how the school deals with it

Raising awareness of bullying by such methods as Friendship Week, Stand Up Week etc helps to give pupils being bullied, and their parents, the confidence to approach the school. It also helps to send a clear message to any pupil who is engaged in bullying that such behaviour will not be tolerated in Mount Temple. The parents of any student engaging in bullying behaviour must also receive the message that they have a major responsibility in addressing their child's behaviour.

Teachers are encouraged to influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner, through a range of curricular initiatives. There are curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. The SPHE curriculum specifically provides for exploring bullying, as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme provides opportunities to explore and discuss areas such as human sexuality and relationships, which has relevance to identity-based bullying. Various other social, health and media education programmes further help to address bullying behaviour. The Anti-Bullying Programme, designed by Classroom Guidance, is used in Mount Temple as part of our wellbeing programme and a link is provided here:

http://www.classroomguidance.ie/9_antiBullying.html

There is space within the teaching of all subjects 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. In English, there is a wide range of literature available to stimulate discussion. In Civil, Social and Political Education (CSPE), the interdependence of people in communities at the local, national and international levels is stressed. In Geography and History, references to colonisation, exploitation and dictatorships can illustrate the negative aspects of power. The work is extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama, Religious Education, and Physical Education. Co-operation and group enterprise are promoted through team sports, school clubs and societies, as well as through practical subjects. Sporting

activities provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression.

6. Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

The development of a system of good supervisory and monitoring measures, to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour, is of paramount importance in Mount Temple. Good supervision and monitoring systems also allow early intervention. Measures in place in Mount Temple include appropriate supervision of school activities on a rota basis. The identification of "hot-spots" and "hot-times" is very beneficial in preventing and dealing with bullying in school. All pupils, and in particular senior pupils and mentors, are a resource to assist in countering bullying – and this process begins from the first time that students enter Mount Temple – when the buddy system is first encountered (where 5th/6th years, trained in mentoring, act as buddies to assigned new 1st years; and where 1st years are given specific training on dealing with bullying).

Student councils and other school clubs and societies are very important. Non-teaching staff are part of the process to counter bullying behaviour in Mount Temple, and SNAs, are encouraged to bring any concerns in this regard to their coordinator, or to the relevant Form Teacher or Year Head.

This anti-bullying policy confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour.

7. Supports for staff

The Board of Management ensures that members of school staff are sufficiently familiar with the school's anti bullying policy to effectively and consistently apply the policy when required. Support for staff should be appropriate to the individual's role and should enable staff to recognise bullying, implement effective strategies for preventing bullying and, where appropriate, intervene effectively.

The Board of Management, through school management, also makes appropriate arrangements to ensure that temporary and substitute staff are sufficiently aware of the school's code of behaviour and its anti-bullying policy. All new and temporary staff are provided with the Staff Handbook, which outlines the ethos of Mount Temple, including our Code of Behaviour and pastoral care system. A staff member responsible for staff induction meets with all such staff and ensures familiarity with our anti-bullying procedures and policy.

8. Mount Temple's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behavior and the established intervention strategies used by the school.

A consistent and clear approach to dealing with bullying when it occurs is essential to effective practice. Mount Temple endeavours to ensure that there is consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour.

A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. Individual teachers will take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy. There are specific members of the teaching staff charged with the investigation, follow-up and recording of incidents of bullying behaviour and this is stated clearly in our anti-bullying policy (see Section 4 above: Relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying).

8.1 Established intervention strategies

The *Action Plan on Bullying*, published by the Department in 2013, highlighted the importance of schools identifying and consistently implementing established evidence-based intervention strategies for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour and preventing its continuation.

There are various approaches and intervention strategies used in Mount Temple. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention will work in all situations. International and national research continues to evolve in this area and the effectiveness of approaches continues to be reviewed.

8.2 Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying

Mount Temple has clear procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying.

- (i) The primary aim for the designated teacher, 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);
- (ii) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise professional judgement to establish the facts, in order to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- (iii) All reports of bullying, including anonymous reports, must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way, pupils will gain confidence in 'telling', which is of vital importance. It will be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not telling tales but are behaving responsibly; and that this is part of their role in this school (in line with the dictum "in Mount Temple we are a telling school")
- (iv) Non-teaching staff, such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers and cleaners, are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

- (v) Parents and pupils are required to cooperate 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;
- (vi) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
- (vii) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents. At all times, where possible, every effort is made to ensure the confidentiality of information given by students;
- (viii) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom, to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- (ix) All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;
- (x) When analysing incidents, 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 conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
- (xi) If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. After that, all those involved should meet 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;
- (xii) Each member of a group should be supported through possible pressures from other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
- (xiii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
- (xiv) Where the relevant teacher has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents 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 parents an opportunity to discuss ways they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and supports for their children;
- (xv) Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear how he/she is in breach of the school's antibullying policy and efforts made to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- (xvi) It must also be made clear to each set of pupils and parents that, where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school;

- (**xvii**) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties should be arranged separately, with a view to possibly bringing them together later, if a pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable which can in many circumstances have a therapeutic effect;
- (**xviii**) Where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that it has occurred, this must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at **Appendix 2.**
- (xix) In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed, the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 - · whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
 - whether 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 or the Form Teacher, Year Head, Deputy Principals or Principal;
- (xx) Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;
- (xxi) If a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

8.3 Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

The Board of Management *must* ensure that Mount Temple has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour and these must be documented in the school's anti-bullying policy. All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour must adhere to the following:

- (i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, she or he will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;
- (ii) If the relevant teacher establishes that bullying has occurred, she/he must keep appropriate written records to assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- (iii) The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 2** to record the bullying behaviour in all circumstances, and

- (a) 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 it 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.

In each circumstance at (a) and (b), the recording template at **Appendix 2** will be completed and retained by the relevant teacher and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principals. The timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template does not preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principals at an earlier stage about a case.

8.4 Bullying as part of a continuum of behaviour

Bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour, rather than a stand-alone issue. In some cases, behaviour may escalate beyond bullying, to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. To ensure that such cases are dealt with appropriately, the school's anti-bullying policy provides for appropriate links with the overall code of behaviour and for referral to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate. Where the school has serious concerns about managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) will be sought.

8.5 Referral of serious cases to TUSLA

In relation to bullying in schools, the *Children First Act 2015* and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* provide that, where "the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult TUSLA with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan".

Serious instances of bullying behaviour should, in accordance with the *Children First Act 2015* and *the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*, be referred to TUSLA and/or Gardaí, as appropriate.

The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 also provide that, where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to TUSLA, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from them.

 $\underline{https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-for-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools.pdf}$

- 9. School programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying
 - (i) A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied is in place through the pastoral care system. This includes the S.N.As, Form Teacher, Year Head, Deputy Principals and Principal, Guidance Counsellors and Chaplain. This ensures that the school works to support the best outcome for them as they may need ongoing assistance. Such pupils may need counselling or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and build resilience whenever this is needed.
 - (ii) A similar programme of support for pupils involved in bullying behaviour is also part of the school's intervention process. For those with low self-esteem, the pastoral care team will work to develop feelings of self worth. It is important that the school's learning strategies allow for enhancement of the pupil's self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling, to help them learn ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.
 - **iii)** Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.
- 10. Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

The effectiveness of Mount Temple's anti-bullying policy is continuously reviewed, considering incidents of bullying behaviour encountered and the school periodically examines its prevention and intervention strategies. Surveys of pupils, staff and parents provide important information about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying measures in place and identify significant behavioural trends that may benefit from early intervention.

The template in the appendix, for recording and reporting bullying to the Principal or Deputy Principals, is a valuable and readily accessible source of data on bullying behaviour in the school. This data is regularly (at least once in every school year) collated and analysed, to monitor levels of bullying behaviour and identify issues that require attention or significant trends in behaviour. A record of this analysis is retained and available to the Board of Management. Appropriate responses to any issues identified are drawn up and implemented.

Mount Temple also recognises that, having successfully improved in this area of student pastoral care through a variety of strategies in recent years (school identity and mission, building a positive atmosphere, developing a culture of respect for and celebration of diversity, supporting a culture of continual improvement of pastoral care systems, development of the care team, reflective practice by Year Heads and Form Teachers, promoting a positive behaviour culture and a system of recognition and rewards) that some of the most successful strategies are not amenable to measurement and hard to quantify – except by the results. Therefore, effective strategies will be monitored not only with reference to data collection, but also by more narrative methods (stories of what works and doesn't work). The implementation and effectiveness of Mount Temple's anti-bullying policy is included as a regular

agenda item for staff meetings, to ensure that concerns about the policy or the welfare of individual pupils can be shared and effectively addressed.

11. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management 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.

12. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all reasonably practicable steps 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. https://www.ihrec.ie/guides-and-tools/human-rights-and-equality-in-the-provision-of-good-and-services/what-does-the-law-say/equal-status-acts/

- 13. This policy is available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy is available to the Department and the Patron if requested.
- 14. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. See Appendix 3 & Appendix 4. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and will be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. It will also be 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.

Signed: Sign	ned:	
Rev. Dr. Anne Lodge	Ms. Helen Gormley	
(Chairperson of Board of Management)	(Principal)	
Date:	Date:	

Appendix 1

Template for recording bullying behaviour

Name	Class	Class		
2. Name(s) and class(es) eng	gaged in b	oullying b	oehaviour	1
a. Source of bullying	g concern/	report aı	nd location of incidents	
(tick relevant box(es)) *				
Pupil concerned			Grounds	
Other Pupil			Classroom	
Parent			Corridor	
Teacher			Toilets	
Other			School Bus	
			Other	
b. Name of person(s)) who repo	orted the	bullying concern	
c. Type of Bullying	Behaviour	(tick rel	evant box(es)) *	
Physical Aggression	Cyber		bullying	
Damage to Property	age to Property Intimid		dation	
	clusion Malic			
Isolation/Exclusion		Malici	ous Gossip	

d. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/AEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)
e. Bri	ief Description of bully	ing behaviou	r and its impact	
	_			
f. De	tails of actions taken			
		(Relevant Tea	cher)	

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal_____

Appendix 2

Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation.

The Board of Management must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

Yes/No

Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	

Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	
Signed (Chairperson, Board of Management)Da	ite:
Signed (Principal)Dat	te:

Appendix 3

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To:	
The Board of Management of	wishes to inform you that:
The Board of Management's annual review of implementation was completed at the Board m	, , ,
This review was conducted in accordance with	the checklist set out in Appendix 2.
Signed (Chairperson, Board of Management)	
Date:	
Signed (Principal)	
Dota	