



St. Malachy's High School

Anti-Bullying Policy

2022-2024

Date ratified by Board of Governors: June 2022

Date of Review: June 2025

Inclusion & Diversity:

St Malachy's High School aims to establish an inclusive community where all students and staff are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of individual differences including, but not limited to, culture, race, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation, gender orientation, appearance, ability or disability. Our school community repudiates bullying behaviour of any kind, to any member of the school community, by any member of the school community'

Rationale:

Bullying behaviour of any kind by any member of St Malachy's High School community to any other member(s) of St Malachy's High School community is completely unacceptable.

All students have a right to learn in a safe, caring environment which is free from the threat of emotional or physical harm. Everyone in St Malachy's High School community is valued and is entitled to have their rights protected. St Malachy's High School aims to promote positive relationships and endeavours to provide a learning environment free from bullying behaviour, including students' journeys to and from school and their experience of school trips and external events. In addition, St Malachy's High School aims to foster an environment of openness in which students, parents/carers and staff feel comfortable to report any bullying behaviours which they feel are taking place.

Aims:

- Raise awareness and promote understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour
- Ensure students and parents/carers know how to raise a concern about bullying behaviour
- Encourage students and parents/carers to report bullying behaviour
- Ensure an appropriate response to all reported instances of bullying behaviour
- Provide support for students who experience bullying behaviour
- Provide support for students who display bullying behaviour
- Encourage those students who engage in bullying behaviour to adopt positive attitudes and behaviour
- Ensure robust monitoring and review procedures are in place following incidents of bullying behaviour
- Provide up to date training for staff and governors

Legislation

This policy is informed and guided by current legislation and DE Guidance listed below:

The Legislative Context:

- Health and Safety at Work NI Order 1978 The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 Article 3 – see DE 1998/25
- WELFARE AND PROTECTION OF PUPILS EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2003
- THE EDUCATION (2006 ORDER) (COMMENCEMENT NO.2) ORDER (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2007
- The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010
- Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

DE Guidance:

- Pastoral Care in Schools: PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR DE, 2001
- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools. A Guide for Schools DE 2017 – to be read in conjunction with the following: *Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, Dept. of Health, Social Services and Public Safety 2016 Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland's (SBNI) Policies and Procedures 2017*
- Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors 2019

Consultation

“Senior leaders should consult regularly with the school community on key policies and procedures that affect the life and work of the school.

REF: ISEF Primary/Post-Primary Pg. 8 EOTAS/Governors/Preschool/Special Schools Pg. 13 ETI, 2017

Definition of Bullying:

St Malachy's High School uses the legal definition of bullying for Northern Ireland as defined in the 2016 Anti-Bullying Act:

(1) In this Act 'bullying' includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of-

- (a) any verbal, written or electronic communication,
- (b) any other act, or
- (c) any combination of those,

by a pupil or a group of pupils against another pupil or group of pupils, with the intention of causing physical or emotional harm to that pupil or group of pupils.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), 'act' includes omission.

The phrase '**is not limited to**' in the definition above gives St Malachy's High School the legal discretion to define a one-off incident (See Appendix 4) as bullying behaviour. This may be particularly the case when the behaviour takes the form of electronic communication. For example, repetition can occur through the repeated viewing and sharing of a post even if there is only one post.

Types of Harm

The phrase '**emotional harm**' is defined as distress or anxiety intentionally caused by scaring, humiliating or affecting a student's self-esteem.

The phrase '**physical harm**' is defined as intentionally hurting a student causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.

The term '**omission**' is defined as where a student is deliberately left out and where there is a wilful failure to include a student. Examples could include purposefully excluding a student from a group of friends' activities or group work in lessons.

The term '**cyber bullying**' is defined as any incidents of online bullying which take place in school during the school day, while travelling to or from school during the school term, while the pupils is in the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school, or while in education provision on behalf of the school away from the school premises must be addressed through the Anti-Bullying Policy.

The act (2016) also gives schools the power to take action to prevent online or cyber bullying that is taking place outside school. However, the Act places no duty on schools to do this.

Terms of Reference:

St Malachy's High School will use the following language when applying the policy: 'student *displaying* bullying behaviour' and 'student(s) *experiencing* bullying behaviour'. Language including 'bully', 'victim' and 'perpetrator' is not considered appropriate and its use will not be accepted. It is important to avoid labelling and stereotyping individual students and to focus instead on the *behaviours*.

Motivating Factors:

there are many factors, and combinations of factors, which may motivate a student to display bullying behaviours towards another student(s). Examples of these include, but are not limited to:

- Religious beliefs
- Political opinions
- Racial group
- Age
- Academic ability
- Sexual orientation
- Gender orientation
- Physical appearance
- Disability
- Special Educational Needs
- Social/economic status
- Family circumstances
- Looked After Child status

Vulnerable Students:

Whilst St Malachy's High School understands that any student could experience bullying behaviours, it is also aware that some groups of students are potentially more vulnerable than others to this behaviour. This includes members of St Malachy's High School's LGBTQ+ community and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As such, the Personal Development curriculum draws attention to the vulnerability of such students as part of St Malachy's High School's preventative measures. St Malachy's also accounts for any individual pupil's developmental age or capacity to understand the impact of their behaviours.

Procedures:

How to Report a concern?

Any student, parent/carer or member of St Malachy's High School community who has a concern about bullying behaviours involving students should report it to the Form Tutor or Head of Year. This can be done in person, through a telephone call or in writing.

Both the Positive Behaviour Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy apply to behaviour which takes place:

- On St Malachy's High School site during school trips, external events or extra-curricular activities
- While students are wearing their school uniform in public e.g., travelling to/from school via public transport at a bus stop/train station or other public place outside of school hours
- When a student is accessing education elsewhere e.g., at another school, EOTAS centre, FE College, or work experience/community placement
- It also can apply to behaviour which takes place electronically if the incident has a direct effect on the student's education.
- If an incident or referral is investigated and deemed not to be a bullying incident, the school can still use our positive behaviour policy if appropriate.

Members of staff

Any alleged bullying behaviour concerns involving member(s) of staff should be directly addressed to the Principal through the Complaints and Concerns Policy.

Recording Information:

All incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported to St Malachy's High School must be recorded in the Bullying Concerns Section of the Behaviour Management Module within SIMs. This will be done by either the Form Tutor, Head of Year or appropriate Senior Manager for the student who is alleged to be displaying bullying behaviour. Legislation requires all schools to include the following information in every recorded instance:

- Where it occurred
- The motivating factors/underlying themes (where known)
- The methods (i.e., verbal, written, electronic or combination thereof)
- How it has been addressed

The purpose of recording information is to promote and sustain a safe and effective learning environment for all. Recorded information enables St Malachy's High School to:

- Identify patterns of behaviour
- Promote inclusive practice by identifying and meeting the needs of individuals and groups
- Evaluate the effectiveness of positive behaviour management strategies
- Ensure that intervention, strategies and procedures are implemented effectively
- Track instances of bullying behaviour
- Provide performance data

Processing Information:

All incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported to St Malachy's High School will be investigated. In the first instance, this is likely to be done by the Form Tutor(s) and/or the Head(s) of Year of the students involved. This process will involve gathering information from all students who are involved in, or may have information about, the alleged bullying behaviour.

The views of all students involved will be carefully listened to. It is likely that the process will also involve liaison with parents/carers and other members of staff as necessary.

A Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF) will be initiated, and Part 1 completed by either the Form Tutor, Head of Year or appropriate Senior Manager of the student who is alleged to be displaying bullying behaviour.

Once the information has been gathered, the appropriate Senior Manager, Head of Year and Form Tutor will decide, based on the information available at that time, whether the behaviour meets the legal criteria of bullying as outlined in the definition above.

In cases which involve students with SEN, the SENCO will also be involved in the decision-making process.

The team will take the following additional aspects into consideration:

- Whether the actions of the student displaying bullying behaviour were intentional
- the level of harm intended and/or caused
- the student's(s') capacity to understand the impact of their behaviour and how this could have been affected by other significant factors including SEN
- any perceived or actual imbalance of power between the student(s) displaying bullying behaviours and those experiencing it, e.g., physical, psychological and/or intellectual

St Malachy's High School recognises that not all socially unacceptable behaviour is bullying behaviour. Equally, not all unacceptable behaviour online is cyber bullying. All members of St Malachy's High School community must participate in the development of the shared understanding of what does and does not constitute bullying behaviour.

As such, St Malachy's High School recognises the need to work on an on-going basis with students and parents/carers to help them understand the differences between behaviour which is unacceptable and that which is bullying of a bullying nature.

Bullying Allegations that are not deemed to be classified as Bullying Behaviour

Alleged bullying and/or socially unacceptable behaviour which St Malachy's High School decides *does not meet* the legal criteria of bullying will be dealt with through St Malachy's High School's Positive Behaviour Policy.

Bullying Allegations that are deemed to be classified as Bullying Behaviour

Alleged bullying behaviour which St Malachy's High School decides *does meet* the legal criteria of bullying will be dealt with through the Anti-Bullying Policy and the remainder of the Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF) will be completed along with any other written evidence collated by the Head of Year with the support of Head of School and Form Tutor.

St Malachy's High School's approach will be based on its understanding that bullying is not 'fixed' by *solely* issuing a consequence and that students on both sides of the issue require support to address and resolve it. In addition to the provision of intervention and support, St Malachy's High School will issue a formal consequence to any students(s) deemed to be displaying bullying behaviours.

Further information on St Malachy's High School's range of consequences is available in the Positive Behaviour Policy. Students and parents/carers should be aware that St Malachy's High School may also apply its Suspension and Expulsion of Students Policy in individual cases and may also refer individual cases to external agencies such as Social Services and/or PSNI.

Any parent/carer who is unhappy with how an incident has been dealt with by staff should contact the Principal who will deal with the issue in line with St Malachy's High School's Complaints and Concerns Policy.

Intervention and support:

Intervention and support provided to students involved in bullying behaviours – either displaying or receiving them – will be taken from the intervention tables (pages 16-19) in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour document (see Appendix 4) and will be based on the following principles:

Intervention and support will:

- be child-centered
- promote resilience
- involve post-incident learning and reflection
- promote reparation through restorative interventions
- be based on restorative approaches
- be evidence based
- be evaluated

Preventative Measures:

St Malachy's High School has in place several measures to promote inclusion and prevent bullying behaviours. At the core of this lies St Malachy's High School's ethos of acceptance of all members of St Malachy's High School community through celebration of differences as well as similarities, as outlined in the Pastoral Care Policy.

In addition, the following measures are in place:

- Consistent implementation of the Positive Behaviour Policy, including the promotion and rewarding of positive behaviour
- The creation and maintenance of positive relationships
- Creation and maintenance of an ethos which promotes aspiration, achievement, and restoration
- Promotion of the welfare and wellbeing of students
- Provision of effective guidance and support
- Reduction/removal of barriers to learning
- A robust and relevant Personal Development Programme
- Active collaboration with external partners including transport services and specialist external agencies
- Whole school awareness of and participation in national Anti-Bullying initiatives such as Anti-Bullying Week/Anti-Bullying Ambassadors
- An expectation that all members of St Malachy's High School community work collaboratively to prevent bullying
- Appropriate and relevant staff training

The Board of Governors:

Legal Duties

1. Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

- Duty of Board of Governors to secure measures to prevent bullying
- Duty to keep a record of incidents of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying involving a registered pupil at the school

2. WELFARE AND PROTECTION OF PUPILS EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2003 - DE Circular Number 2003/13 - which amends Article 3 of 1998 N.I. Order as follows:

Article 17 DUTY TO SAFEGUARD AND PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF PUPILS

The Board of Governors is required to:

- “Safeguard and promote the welfare of all registered pupils whether they are on the school premises or elsewhere while in the lawful control or charge of a member of staff of the school” (Article 17: 2)
- Consult with registered pupils on the general principles which will be reflected in the school’s discipline policy (Article 19: 13 & 14)

St Malachy’s High School Legal Duties

1. WELFARE AND PROTECTION OF PUPILS EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2003 - DE Circular Number 2003/13 - which amends Article 3 of 1998 N.I. Order as follows:

Article 17 DUTY TO SAFEGUARD AND PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF PUPILS

- When deciding on measures which will be used to encourage good behaviour in the school, must **specifically include measures to prevent bullying among pupils** (Article 19:14)
- Before deciding on measures to encourage good behaviour **must consult with pupils registered at the school and their parents**” (Article 19:14)
- Implications Arising - “All schools will need to be satisfied that their current discipline policy deals with the **PREVENTION OF BULLYING** among pupils in a sufficiently clear and robust way to satisfy the new legal requirement “(Article 19:15)

The Principal /SLT

Roles & Responsibilities:

- Have oversight of the Anti-Bullying Policy
- Ensure that the policy is effectively implemented
- Ensure that the policy is reviewed at least every four years
- Ensure there is a whole-school Anti-Bullying approach through determining the preventative measures to be taken to prevent bullying
- Ensure that preventative measures are kept under review and are fit for purpose and consult with students and parents/carers as part of this review process e.g. through surveys
- Engage with Governor training as appropriate
- Monitor Anti-Bullying measures and reported incidents through a standing item on agendas, using this to inform the School Development Plan where necessary
- Identify trends and patterns to inform further development of policy and practice
- Ensure that the school community, including students and parents/carers, are involved in the policy review process

Pastoral Teams

Head of School/Form Tutor/Head of Year

Roles & Responsibilities:

- Ensure that all incidents of alleged bullying behaviours are recorded
- Ensure that records include motivation, method, how each incident was addressed and the outcomes
- Review the effectiveness of interventions used and their outcomes, amending them as required
- Ensure that the policy is as accessible to students and parent/carers as possible, in terms of language, content, placement and availability
- Analysis of data from SIMs to identify themes, trends and patterns to ensure early intervention and effective reporting to Governors
- Liaison with the Teacher in Charge of Personal Development to ensure that any themes, trends or patterns are addressed as part of the PD curriculum
- Ensure parents/carers and students are aware of the process

Policy Review:

Legislation requires St Malachy's High School to review its Anti-Bullying Policy at least every four years. The Board of Governors will, however, review the policy every two years in order to be able to review current practices and issues in a timely and effective way. Students will be involved in this process via the Student Council, focus groups and student surveys; parents/carers via the PTA and staff through focus groups. As part of this process, all reports of alleged bullying behaviours will be taken into consideration. All students, parents/carers and members of staff will be provided with a copy of the policy.

Linked Documents:

Complaints and Concerns Policy

E-Safety Policy

Pastoral Care Policy

Positive Behaviour Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Safe Handling Policy

Special Educational Needs & Inclusion Policy

Suspension & Expulsion of Pupils Policy 8

Appendix 1: Legislation & Research Guidance

Legislation & Guidance:

This policy is informed and guided by current legislation and DE Guidance listed below:

The legislative context:

- Health and Safety at Work NI Order 1978
- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 Article 3- see DE 1998/25
- Welfare and Protection of Pupils Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003
- The Education (2006 Order) (Commencement No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007
- The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010
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- Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors 2019

Supportive Research

<https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.465.6640&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

<https://bullyproofclassroom.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Kenneth-Rigby-Book.pdf>

Appendix 2: Guidance for a One-off Incident

One-off incident	
When determining whether a one-off incident may be classified as bullying, the school shall take into consideration the following criteria and use the information gathered to inform and guide the decision making process:	
Criteria:	Information gathered:
Severity and significance of the incident	
Evidence of pre-meditation	
Significant level of physical/emotional impact on individual/s	
Significant level of impact on wider school community	
Status/nature of previous relationships between those involved	
Records exist of previous incidents involving the individuals	