

Margaret Aylward Community College

Draft Anti-bullying policy

Mission Statement

Margaret Aylward Community College seeks to encourage all to achieve their potential in a supportive atmosphere which respects diversity. The school welcomes the involvement of parents and community in developing the skills necessary for students to become self-motivating members of society.

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour Guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB), the Board of Management of Margaret Aylward Community College 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 by the Department of Education and Skills (DES).
2. This policy focuses on students in their relationships with others in Margaret Aylward Community College i.e student/student, student/teacher and teacher/student. The matter of intra-staff bullying is addressed in the following City of Dublin Education Training Board (CDETb) policies:
 - Staff Handbook (2011): City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb)
 - Complaints Procedure: CDETb
 - Code of Practice for Dealing with Complaints of Bullying and Harassment in CDETb Workplaces (2006)
 - Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers: The Teaching Council

3. 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 positive school culture and climate which:
 - ✓ is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - ✓ encourages students and staff to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment;
 - ✓ promotes respectful relationships across the school community.
- Effective leadership.
- A whole school 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 students;
 - ✓ Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying;
 - ✓ including in particular homophobic, transsexual, and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of students.
- 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.

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

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.
- ✓ Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's religion, gender, sexual orientation, a person's membership of the Traveller community, and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

It is important to realise that disagreements between young people are part and parcel of the road to adulthood. Every youthful disagreement should not be treated as a full-blown bullying episode. Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging,

should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour. 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.*

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Legislation:

Those who bully others in a non-physical way often do not realise that their actions may be a criminal offence under:

1. Section 2 of the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act (1989) makes it a criminal offence for a person:

'... to publish or distribute written material, to use words, behave or display written material ... or to distribute, show or play a recording of visual images or sounds, if the written material, words, behaviour, visual images or sounds, as the case may be, are threatening, abusive or insulting and are intended or, having regard to all the circumstances, are likely to stir up hatred.'

Those convicted may be imprisoned or fined.

2. Section 10 of the Non-Fatal Offences against the Person Act 1997 which says that a person may be guilty of this crime if s/he:

'... without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, by any means including by use of the telephone, harasses another by persistently following, watching, pestering, besetting, or communicating with him or her.

3. Statements made on social media sites are covered by the provisions of the Defamation Act 2009, which at Section 2 defines a defamatory statement as *'one which tends to injure a person's reputation in the eyes of reasonable members of society'*.

Many, young and not so young, seem to feel that by posting anonymously on social networking sites, they can guarantee that their identity is protected. This, however, is not the case. In many cases the content of messages makes it easy to identify the perpetrator. Where the Gardaí have grounds for believing that criminal activity may be occurring, applications can be made to the courts requiring the internet service provider, or others in possession of relevant information, to divulge a perpetrator's identity.

In Margaret Aylward Community College where it is felt that bullying may amount to a criminal act, the college will seek legal advice and the matter will be reported to the Gardaí.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

Where bullying occurs *between students* the relevant teacher (s) for investigating and dealing with this are:

Class Teachers, Class Tutors, Home School and Community Liaison Teacher, Programme Co-ordinators, Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal, Principal.

Where bullying occurs *between student/teacher* or *teacher/student* the relevant members of college staff for investigating and dealing with this are:

Class Tutors, Programme Co-ordinator, Home School and Community Liaison Teacher, Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal, Principal

Investigating, Intervening and Recording by relevant Teacher(s)

Action Taken	Procedure	Support and /or Sanction may include:
<p>Teacher</p> <p>Class Tutor</p> <p><i>When a professional judgement is formed that bullying can be resolved</i></p>	<p>Challenge the behaviour as being unacceptable</p> <p>Report incident(s)/inform Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator/ Programme Co-ordinator of bullying incident.</p> <p>When delegated responsibility to investigate bullying incident teacher/class tutor to speak to both parties separately and try to resolve issues</p> <p>Record to be kept: may be students' accounts/teacher/tutor account/SNA/ or Report Template (Appendix 3), Cyberbullying Incident Form</p> <p>Follow up progress with victim, and student who is bullying</p>	<p>Serious talk with student(s) about the effects of their behaviour</p> <p>Inform parent(s)/guardian</p> <p>Verbal warning: Student(s) involved warned to stop</p> <p>Seek verbal agreement about future behaviour</p> <p>Outline a fair outcome if appropriate</p> <p>Address issue of bullying through class programmes or referral to Care Team</p>

Action Taken	Procedure	Support and /or Sanction may include:
Programme Co-ordinator (assisted by class tutor, or other member(s) of staff, Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator	<p>Incident(s) investigated by Programme Co-ordinator, Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator</p> <p>Principal/deputy principal informed</p> <p>Parents informed and invited to a school meeting with Tutor/Home School Liaison Teacher</p> <p>Keep a record: Report Template: Appendix 3 Cyberbullying Incident Form</p> <p>Follow up progress with victim and student responsible for bullying behaviour</p>	<p>Serious talk with student(s) about their behaviour and future behaviour</p> <p>Signed written agreement (contract) (student/parent/guardian) about future behaviour.</p> <p>Student to attend school counsellor</p> <p>Extra homework, Lunch time detention, After school detention, In-house suspension, Withdrawal of privileges, Suspension</p> <p>Monitor future behaviour</p>

Action Taken	Procedure	Support and /or Sanction may include
Principal or Deputy Principal	<p>Parent(s) and student (s) meet with Principal and / or Deputy Principal</p> <p>Feedback to Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator/ Programme Co-ordinators/Class Tutor</p> <p>Records kept</p> <p>Follow up progress with victim and student(s) responsible for bullying behaviour</p>	<p>Parents are met and conditions set regarding student(s)' future behaviour</p> <p>Student(s) to attend counselling</p> <p>Contact with support agencies</p> <p>Referral, where appropriate, to CDETb psychologist/An Garda Síochána /HSE/CAMHS</p>
Incident(s) referred to College Committee		<p>The student(s)' future in the college may be considered</p>

5. Education and prevention strategies used by the College (including e.g cyber-bullying, identity-based bullying e.g homophobic and transphobic)

1. Margaret Aylward Community College will distribute the Anti-Bullying Policy, developed following consultation with staff, students, and parents, to all members of the school community. The policy will be published on the college website, be included in teachers' and student diaries (abridged version). Copies of the policy will be made available to non-teaching staff, parents /guardians. The overall aim is that all members of the school community will be familiar with, and consistently apply, the Anti-Bullying Policy.
2. The College's Anti-Bullying Policy to be reflected in the Code of Behaviour. Measures for dealing with bullying behaviour to be specified within the framework of the Code of Behaviour. Clear indicators to be included in both the Anti-Bullying Policy and College Codes of Behaviour on what the school is doing to prevent bullying behaviour, what teachers, students and parents can do, who to contact, and how incidents are handled.
3. An Anti-Bullying Charter will be displayed in a prominent position within the college.
4. The college, which has an open and inclusive admission's policy, will continue to develop a positive school culture and climate where respectful relationships among all members of the school community are the norm.
5. The college, which has achieved a Yellow Flag for promoting diversity, is committed to implementing its Anti-Racist Policy
6. The college aims to promote a culture (Fallon & Kent: www.antibullyingcampaign.ie) where bullying is 'Recognised' for what it is, 'Rejected' for what it does, and 'Reported' so that it can be effectively dealt with.
7. By working together, and maintaining school wide vigilance, the Principal/Deputy Principal, and teachers, through application of the teaching council Code of Professional Conduct, will provide effective leadership in the modelling of appropriate behaviour among members of the school community. Non-teaching staff, and parent(s) /guardian(s), will also be asked to work with the college in the achievement of this aim.
8. The college's Anti-Bullying Policy will be highlighted to students during student induction sessions. Students will be encouraged to note and report bullying to parent(s)/guardian(s), and teaching staff including the deputy principal and principal. Margaret Aylward Community College aims to promote a 'telling community' culture among students.
9. The college will highlight the problem of bullying through the organisation of a staff in-service day and awareness weeks in the college. Parents will be invited to attend training days.

10. Staff development will focus on the implementation of the college anti-bullying policy consistently and effectively.
11. Awareness of bullying and its effects, including identity-based bullying, such as homophobic and transphobic, will be achieved through the display of posters (including LGBT posters), class/group discussions, videos and workshops for students.
12. The college aims to develop a shared understanding of what bullying is, its impact, and how it is dealt with by organising ongoing activities and events that continually raise awareness of bullying. The aim will be to change attitudes and behaviour.
13. All reasonable steps will be taken by the college to prevent harassment, and sexual harassment, on the grounds of gender, including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, and membership of the traveller community. Particular attention will be given to the most vulnerable students.
14. In combating bullying, the college will take particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with Special Educational Needs.
15. The college will continue to organise the supervision of students during school break times in the mornings, and at lunch-time.
16. The college aims to establish links with bus drivers and others who come into daily contact with students in order to get their assistance in reporting bullying incidents to parents and college staff. Students, parents, non-teaching staff, or members of the wider community will be encouraged to report incidents, carried out by students wearing the college uniform, to any member of the teaching staff on the understanding that these matters are reported in confidence.
17. Department of Education and Skills Guidelines states that 'parents and students are expected to assist the college in resolving any issues and restoring relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
18. Students/parent(s) will be asked to complete annual questionnaires so that 'hot spots' and 'hot times' (Department of Education and Skills Guidelines) for bullying to take place, will be identified and monitored.
19. The college aims to develop a 'mentoring' system. Senior students will act as mentors to younger students and will be assisted by college teaching staff in this regard.
20. Margaret Aylward Community College Student Council, which represents students of all ages, to be enabled, through training, to act as an important 'voice' for students in relation to the problem of bullying.
21. Parents, through a parents' group, to be encouraged and supported in their efforts to implement measures to counter-act bullying problems, such as the organisation of workshops for parents, and contributing to college anti-bullying policy development, and annual policy reviews.

22. Measures to prevent cyber-bullying will include advising students and their parents about appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe online (The Safe Click Code & Netiquette), and developing a culture of reporting concerns. (Cyberbully Incident Form).
23. To ensure that opportunities for cyber-bullying do not arise within the college the Computer & Network Usage Policy (CDETB) will continue to be implemented and closely monitored.
24. The college Code of Behaviour in relation to the use of student iPhones, mobile/camera phones with wi-fi access within the college to be reviewed.
25. The college, through curricular and extra-curricular activities, will continue to provide opportunities for students to develop their self-esteem. This may be achieved by participating in sport, Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) initiatives, School Completion Programme (SCP) activities, outdoor education, music, Sports and Cultural Council (SCC) activities such as Debating and the Student Council.
26. Curricular initiatives to promote respect for diversity and inclusiveness will continue to be highlighted within Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Civic Social and Political Education (CSPE) and Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) programmes.
27. Opportunities to highlight the problem of bullying will be pursued within all subject areas such as English literature, Geography, History, Art, Religion and Physical Education.
28. Students in Margaret Aylward Community College will continue to be supported by school management, teachers, the tutor/pastoral care system, Programme Co-ordinators, guidance and counselling, resource/learning support, the Home School and Community Liaison Teacher, and Student Award Scheme.
29. Through discussion, and instruction, the college, in partnership with parents, will continue to equip students with strategies for dealing with bullying problems as they arise. This will also apply to students who witness, or have knowledge of, bullying taking place.
30. Students will be explicitly taught:
 - Definition and Types of Bullying
 - Causes and Effects of Bullying
 - Impact and Indicators of Bullying
 - Different ways technology can be used to cyber-bully and how to prevent this happening
 - Characteristics associated with a student who bullies and the victim of bullying
 - The development of good social skills and respect for all
 - Strategies/measures for dealing with problems if they arise, including cyber-bullying.

6. Procedures for investigating, following up and recording of bullying behaviour, and intervention strategies used by the School/College for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

Investigating:

The primary aim of investigating and dealing with issues of bullying is to resolve any issues and restore, as far as is practicable; the relationship of the parties involved (rather than apportion blame).

1. Any student, member of staff (teaching/ non-teaching), or parent, may report concerns about bullying.
2. All reported incidents of bullying will be investigated using a calm, problem-solving approach (What, Where, When, Who, Why) outside classrooms. Due regard to be maintained in relation to the sensitivity of bullying incidents and issues of confidentiality.
3. Reports or allegations of bullying should be initially reported to teachers, tutors or programme co-ordinators for investigation.
4. The Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator/ Tutor / Programme Co-ordinator may delegate another teacher to carry out initial enquiries.
5. It may be helpful or appropriate to ask those involved to write down their account of the bullying incident(s).
6. If a group is accused of being involved in bullying, they should be interviewed individually.
7. If a reported incident is perceived to be of a very serious nature, it will be dealt with and investigated directly by the Principal /Deputy Principal.
8. If it is established that bullying has taken place, the parents of those involved must be informed at an early stage and offered an opportunity to help resolve the issue.
9. If it is established that bullying has taken place all parties involved should be referred to the schools Anti Bullying Code.
10. If disciplinary action is taken against a student(s) as a result of a breach of the Schools Anti-Bullying policy, it will be made clear to students, and parents, that the action is a private matter between the student, their parents, and the school.
11. Annual student and parent questionnaires to be issued, and analysed with a view to reviewing/updating the college Anti-Bullying Policy on an annual basis.

Recording and Follow-up of Bullying Behaviour

Recording:

1. If it is established that bullying has occurred, appropriate written records/accounts must be kept by Teachers, Class Tutors, Programme Co-ordinators, Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator.
2. If it is established that bullying has occurred, appropriate written records must be kept to help resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
3. The Principal/Deputy Principal must be provided with, or made aware of, written records/accounts on each bullying incident.
4. Due care to be taken, in the interests of Data Protection, in relation to storage/ access to Bullying Reports/accounts.
5. In cases where the relevant investigating teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 days after the initial determination that bullying behaviour occurred, this fact must be recorded on the Template of recording bullying behaviour (Appendix 3)
6. Appendix 3 is also completed by the investigating teacher where bullying behaviour is being reported directly to the Principal/Deputy Principal.
7. A report on bullying is made at every meeting of the College Committee and recorded in the minutes of that meeting.

Follow-up:

1. In determining whether the bullying incident has been adequately addressed, the investigating teacher will consider in their professional judgement:
 - a. Has the bullying behaviour ceased?
 - b. Have parents been contacted?
 - c. Have the issues been resolved as far as practicable?
 - d. Has the relationship between the parties been resolved as far as practicable?
 - e. Has feedback been received from all parties involved
 - f. Have students who become unnecessarily involved, or were bystanders in bullying incidents, been dealt with through the college code of behaviour.
2. Parent(s) /student(s) who are not satisfied that the school has dealt with a case of bullying in accordance with Department of Education and Skills guidelines may refer the matter to the College's Complaints Procedures.
3. If a parent/student has exhausted the college's anti-bullying procedures, and are not satisfied with the outcome, they will be advised of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman / Ombudsman for Children
4. A review of the schools Anti-Bullying Policy is to be carried out annually.

Established Intervention Strategies:

If it is established that bullying has occurred, the following options or combination of options are available for dealing with the issue:

1. Teacher / Class Tutor / Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator / Programme Co-ordinators speak with the individuals involved.
2. The Principal /Deputy Principal speak with the individuals involved.
3. Parents are informed.
4. Verbal warnings that bullying must stop. Verbal agreements sought from student(s).
5. Heightened level of supervision of pupils.
6. Peer pressure support for students to be provided.
7. Address issue of bullying through class programmes / or refer to Care Team.
8. Signed written agreements / contracts from students and signed by parent(s)/guardian
9. Disciplinary action is implemented according to College Code of Behaviour.
10. Conditions set regarding future behaviour
11. A referral made to the Guidance Counsellor.
12. Referral made to the Psychological service where serious bullying behaviour occurs
13. Referral of serious cases to the HSE/CAMHS/An Garda Siochána
14. Code of Behaviour to be understood and signed by all students.

8.0 Programme of support for working with students affected by bullying is as follows:

The College will put in place a programme of supports for students who have been bullied. This programme will involve the following elements.

- Students who have been bullied will be:
 - ✓ offered appropriate counselling to help them to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.
 - ✓ provided with opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self esteem, to develop their social skills, and to build their resilience.
- Students who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with their teachers, and their parents, and to avail of counselling where they feel it may assist them to cope effectively with what they have experienced. Students who have concerns to be given an opportunity to report matters in confidence.

- Supports to be provided for students through teachers, Class Tutors, Senior Tutors, Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator, Home School and Community Liaison Teacher, Programme Co-ordinators, Deputy Principal or Principal
- Anti-Bullying Induction/Workshops to be provided for all students at the beginning of the school year
- Access to on-line supports and information (i.e External Agencies)
- Anti-bullying posters to be displayed in school
- Anti-bullying contact details displayed in the college
- Counselling service provided by the CDET B Psychological Services

9.0 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 implementation and effectiveness of the College's anti-bullying policy will be an agenda item for all staff meetings – so the concerns about the policy and/or the welfare of individual students can be shared and effectively addressed.
- Data gathered through the reporting templates will be collated and analysed annually with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour and identifying issues requiring attention. This analysis will complement the information gathered through the bullying surveys.
- At least once in every school term, The Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out the following.
 - ✓ the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template) since the previous report to the Board.
 - ✓ confirmation that all cases referred via the recording template have been or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy. The minutes of Board of Management' meetings will record the Principal's report but in doing so will not include any identifying details of the students involved.

10.0 Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the College will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of students or staff or the harassment of students 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.

11.0 Policy Adoption and Review

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ .

12.0 Policy Dissemination and Publication

This policy will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parent School Association/Group (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

13.0 Policy Review

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management annually (Checklist provided for this completed). Details of the review will be recorded in the minutes of the Board of Management' meeting that adopted the review and a record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Patron and the Department of Education and Skills. The Board of Management will ensure that an action plan is put in place to address any areas for improvement identified by the annual review.

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 / Group.

In the case of the Department of Education and Skills, it is appreciated that the Inspectorate will place a strong focus on the actions the College takes to create a positive school culture and to prevent and tackle bullying.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: _____ **Date of next review:** _____

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____
