Sancta Maria College Anti-Bullying Policy

Mission Statement:

Sancta Maria College is a voluntary Catholic secondary school under the trusteeship of CEIST whose core values are inclusive of the Mercy philosophy of education.

We welcome, care for and support all within the school community through the promotion of

- Respect
- Being just & responsible
- Quality teaching and learning
- An inclusive community
- Life-long learning

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 Sancta Maria 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.

2. 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) 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; and

- promotes respectful relationships across the school community

- Fosters a positive school culture and climate. See Appendix 1.

(b) Effective leadership

(c) A school-wide approach

(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

(e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-

- build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and

- explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying;

- effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

(g) Supports for staff

(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and

(i) 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 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 and

- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's 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, do not fall within the definition of bullying and 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.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with 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.*

Examples of bullying behaviours

General behaviours which apply to all	• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • Physical aggression • Damage to property

	• Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • The "look" • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
Cyber	• **Denigration**: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation • **Harassment**: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • **Impersonation**: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name • **Flaming**: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • **Trickery**: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • **Outing**: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • **Exclusion**: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • **Cyber stalking**: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

Identity Based Behaviours
Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).

Homophobic and Transgender	• Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours

Relational	include: • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • "Bitching" • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The "look"
Sexual	• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	• Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person's disability • Setting others up for ridicule

4. The relevant teacher(s) * for investigating and dealing with bullying is any member of the teaching staff who may be informed that bullying may be taking place. Relevant teachers may suspect that bullying may be taking place. The teacher must follow the procedure stated in point 6 below to determine if bullying has occurred. Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it. If the Principal or Deputy Principal is informed of bullying they may ask the class tutor or the Year Head to act as the relevant teacher. If Bullying has taken place the relevant teacher hands over all documentation to the relevant person who is tasked with resolving, monitoring and reporting all future incidents to the principal.

The Relevant persons in SMC are the Year Heads. The procedure outlined in point 6 below must be followed.

5. The education and prevention strategies in Sancta Maria College are as follows.

> **School-wide approach**
> • A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community. F bullying
> • The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
> • The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
> • Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an

- awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it- prevention and intervention.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- SMC has an effective mentoring system in place. The student council contribute to a safe school environment by agreeing the policy every year as members change.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be included in student journals.
- The parents and student council ratify the school's anti-bullying policy and the policy is then written into SMC's Code of Behaviour which must be abided by.
- The SPHE Cool School programme is implemented in Junior Cycle every three years and can be adapted if problems arise .Here in SMC, SPHE is an effective programme for identifying bullying behaviours.
- Every November all class tutors in junior cycle survey students regarding positive and negative bullying behaviours. During this awareness raising week anti-bullying displays are emphasised throughout the week.
- Cool School's and SPHE programmes encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly. Also ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell.
  - o Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - o Phone call to the school from parent/guardian or speak to a trusted teacher in the school.
  - o Anti-bully box.
  - o Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - o Administer a confidential questionnaire in November to all pupils.
  - o Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. GLEN www.glen.ie, Be-LonGTowww.belongto.org

Implementation of curricula
- SMC fully implements SPHE and CSPE curricula and the RSE programme and the RSE programme which in 5th and LC year is delivered via RE and a policy has been drawn up.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.

- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Cool School Lessons, #UP2US,, On My Own Two Feet.
- School wide delivery of lessons on Relational aggression (Cool School Programme: A Friend in Deed), Cyber Bullying (#UP2US, Be Safe-Be Web wise, Think Before you Click, Let's Fight it Together), Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying (Growing up LGBT, Stand Up Programme, The Trust pack)Diversity and Inter-culturalism. The school should list every resource related to the SPHE curriculum, and make a list of supports.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programme .These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying at SMC we target 2nd year to take part in this programme.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to pro-gramme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

   Links to other policies
- List of school policies are available on www.sanctamaria.ie.

 6. Sancta Maria College's procedures for follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school   for investigating and dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

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Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

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The primary aim 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);

Reporting bullying behaviour

1. Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset. The aim is not to apportion blame is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable the relationships of the parties involved. In SMC we encourage a positive school culture whereby students, parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school. We encourage an open dialogue be-tween school staff and students to actively discourage and tell about bullying behaviours.

2. All reports e.g. bully box, parents/students/teachers telling, including anonymous reports of bullying are to be recorded, investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. Teaching staff should inform the Deputy Principal that they are investigating a suspected case of bully-ing. The Deputy Principal can then inform the relevant teacher of any further reports regard-ing the investigation. Non teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the Deputy Principal who will inform the relevant teacher;

3. Dealing with reports of bullying, the class teacher and/or class tutor will exercise his/her pro-fessional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved; if it is determined that bullying has not occurred the class teacher and/or class tutor will try to reconcile the parties involved and can be supported by the pastoral

care team in this. The school's Code of Conduct will apply here. All documentation regarding the incident   should be placed in the students file.

4. A *Bullying Report Form* (Appendix 2) is available from the Secretary's office to any student and his/her parents/guardians who wishes to use it. If the relevant teacher determines that bullying has taken place the teacher now hands all documentation to the relevant person. The Bullying Report   form will be used firstly to record the initial findings of the reports that have been investigated by class or subject teachers and secondly those, which require further action or monitoring. The **relevant person** will meet and work with both victim and perpetrator regarding a particular incident, relevant person must record follow-up and collate documentation along with any relevant students' notes etc with the Bullying Report Form.

The support and advice of the pastoral care team is available to the relevant teacher throughout Investigating and dealing with incidents all levels of investigation.

5. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant)teacher in conjunction with the pastoral care team and the relevant person will exercise their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
6. They should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
7. Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
8. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;
9. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, 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 a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
10. If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met 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;
11. Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;
 It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
12. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the matter can now be brought to the attention of the relevant person and all documentation should be lodged with the relevant person.
13. The parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
14. Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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;
15. Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behav-

iour, it should be made clear to him/her that the matter is now being passed to the relevant person who will inform he/she how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;

16. It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school;

Follow up and recording

17. In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant person must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
- Whether any 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;
-Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s)s or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

18. Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should 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.

19. Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.

20. In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Pupils.

Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred
- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher. The DP's role is crucial as an information conduit between staff and the relevant teacher.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant person, the relevant person must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same. The relevant person must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

Informal-determination that bullying has occurred
- If it is established that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must forward appropriate written records to the relevant person which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- All documentation regarding incidents of bullying and follow up documentation will be stored in the central filing system.

The relevant person must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying

behaviour in the following circumstances:

a) in cases 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 bullying behaviour 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.
The school should list behaviours that must be recorded and reported immediately to the principal. These should be in line with the school's code of behaviour.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant person in question and a copy maintained by the principal. Due consideration needs to be given to where these records are kept, who has access to them, and how long they will be retained. Decisions around record keeping should be noted in this policy.

Established intervention strategies
- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s)s to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires
- Peer mediation where suitable training has been given

The Procedures mention the following intervention strategies and reference Ken Rigby;
www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/BullyingPreventionStrategiesinSchools Ken Rigby.pdf
- The traditional disciplinary approach
- Strengthening the victim
- Mediation
- Restorative Practice
- The Support Group Method
- The Method of Shared Concern

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

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
    - Pastoral care system
    - Mentoring system
    - Tutor/Year head system

- Group work such as circle time

- If pupils require counselling of further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

8. 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.

- A timetable supervision rota is operated under the S&S scheme
- Bullying danger spots have been identified via SPHE SURVEY OF 1ST YEAR STUDENTS
- Parents and pupils been consulted in the identification of these danger spots.
- The pastoral care team including year heads, class tutors, SPHE, Guidance, RE, CSPE, HSCL, Learning Support teachers support measures to counteract bullying behaviour.
- A mentoring system is in place and senior mentors are a resource used to assist in counteracting bullying.
- The student council ratifies the policy each year as members change.

- An Acceptable Use Policy is in place in the school.
  o All Internet sessions are supervised by a teacher.
  o Private internet use via smartphone etc is not permitted in the school. Refer to mobile phone use policy.
  o Pupils have been instructed to use approved class accounts for email purposes and to use these only under teacher supervision.
Note that the Schools Broadband Programme has blocked all social networking sites on the basis that they waste time and take up too much of the bandwidth which is been provided for educational purposes only.

9. Prevention of Harassment
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 20/05/2014. This was proposed by Mr A. Durkan and seconded by Mr J. Corrigan.

11. This policy has been 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 Parents' Association (where one exists). 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 readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and 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: Mr Pat Sheridan   Signed: Mrs Pauline Moran
        (Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date: 20/05/2014   Date: 20/05/2014

*
1. The relevant teacher is the person aware of or made aware of the bullying.
2. The relevant person is the Year Head.
3. The relevant teacher is the person who is made aware of suspected bullying.