



# Mount Sackville Secondary School

*"Ours is not to reap the harvest, ours is just to sow the seed"*  
Blessed Anne-Marie Javouhey

## Mount Sackville's Anti-bullying Policy

### Mission Statement

The educational philosophy of Mount Sackville is the all-rounded development of the student: religious, spiritual, moral, intellectual, emotional, physical, social and cultural. We strive to bring about this process of maturing in a Christian context.

### School Aims and Ethos

- We are committed to respecting the individuality of each student and helping her to realise her full potential.
- We encourage the pursuit of excellence and a high standard of teaching and learning opportunities is offered.
- We provide opportunities for prayer and reflection and to relate to others in a Christian way.
- We work to create a caring school community based on respect, integrity, honesty and justice.
- We prepare our students to take their place as self-confident, articulate young women who will meet the challenges of modern life with serenity and courage.

### Anti-Bullying Charter

Every person in Mount Sackville has the right to teaching, learning and working in a caring and safe environment.

As part of our Cluny ethos all members of this school community treat each other with consideration, respect and dignity, irrespective of any personal or social difference.

Bullying of any form, including cyber-bullying is neither accepted, nor tolerated in this school.



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## Mount Sackville's Anti-Bullying Policy

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 Mount Sackville Secondary School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013.
2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students 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 to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
    - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
  - Effective leadership
  - A school-wide approach
  - A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
  - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that
    - build empathy, respect and resilience in students
    - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic 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
  - An annual review of our anti-bullying policy
3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:



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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 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.

The list of examples of bullying behaviour below is non-exhaustive:

## Examples of Bullying Behaviour

General behaviours which apply to all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.</li> <li>• Physical aggression</li> <li>• Damage to property</li> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Slagging</li> <li>• The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person</li> <li>• Offensive graffiti</li> <li>• Extortion</li> <li>• Intimidation</li> <li>• Insulting or offensive gestures</li> <li>• The "look"</li> <li>• Invasion of personal space</li> <li>• A combination of any of the types listed.</li> </ul>
Cyber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Denigration: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation</li> <li>• Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual</li> <li>• Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name</li> <li>• Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</li> </ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online</li> <li>• Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</li> <li>• Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</li> <li>• Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety</li> <li>• Silent telephone/mobile phone call</li> <li>• Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls</li> <li>• Abusive text messages</li> <li>• Abusive email</li> <li>• Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/Twitter/YouTube/Snapchat/ Instagram or on games consoles</li> <li>• Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures</li> <li>• Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation</li> <li>• Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation</li> <li>• Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner</li> <li>• Physical intimidation or attacks</li> <li>• Threats</li> </ul>
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background</li> <li>• Exclusion on the basis of any of the above</li> </ul>
Relational	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malicious gossip</li> <li>• Isolation &amp; exclusion</li> <li>• Ignoring</li> <li>• Excluding from the group</li> <li>• Taking someone's friends away</li> <li>• "Bitching"</li> <li>• Spreading rumours</li> <li>• Breaking confidence</li> <li>• Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear</li> <li>• The "look"</li> </ul>
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching</li> <li>• Harassment</li> </ul>



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Special Educational Needs,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some students' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some students' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.</li> </ul>
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mimicking a person's disability</li> <li>• Setting others up for ridicule</li> </ul>
High Achievers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Exclusion</li> <li>• Isolation</li> <li>• "The Look"</li> </ul>

The school reserves the right to apply its bullying policy in respect of bullying that occurs at a location, activity, function or programme that is not school related if in the opinion of the Principal and/or Board of Management the alleged bullying has created a hostile environment at school for the victim, has infringed on the rights of the victim of the school and/or has materially or substantially disrupted the education process or orderly operation of the school.

4. In Mount Sackville a student who is experiencing bullying may approach the following:

- Class Tutor and/or Dean
- Guidance Counsellor
- The Chaplain
- The Student Support Team
- Any member of staff with whom the student feels comfortable
- Principal or Deputy Principal
- The Anti-bullying committee (Ms Delaney, Ms Begley, Ms Meade, Mr Murphy, Ms Kennedy, Ms Hegarty, Mr McKenna and Mr Leonard).
- The Ambassador Anti-Bullying Team
- Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it

A student should feel comfortable reporting a bullying incident by using one, or any, of the following approaches:

- Directly approaching a teacher at suitable time.
- Handing up a note with homework or at tutor time,
- Placing a note in the "worry" box at reception.



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- Getting a parent/guardian to contact the school by ringing the class tutor/Dean or emailing either.
- Participating in a questionnaire twice a year (mid Oct – mid Nov and mid Feb – mid March) to all students to be administered by the Class Tutor/SPHE Teacher/RE Teacher.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

The policy addresses bullying behaviour, harassment and sexual harassment.

While it primarily addresses issues related to bullying of students, it applies also to teaching and other school staff, parents/guardians and others insofar as measures under the policy relate to them.

The policy applies:

- during school time (including break and lunch times)
- going to and from school
- during school tours/fieldtrips
- during after school sporting and debating activities
- during extra-curricular activities
- to any behaviour of a bullying nature (outside school) which seriously impacts on a students' participation in school and / or where the matter relates to the school's duty of care of a student.

Actions to prevent bullying:

- Our Anti-Bullying Policy is an integral part of Mount Sackville's Code of Behaviour.
- Everyone in this school has a duty to look out for any behaviour which can be deemed bullying (from list above). This includes parents/guardians and the wider school community.

The Ambassador Anti-bullying Programme has been adopted by the school. This is where a number of students have been trained as Ambassadors to promote anti-bullying in our school community.

- An anti-bullying charter is placed in all classrooms (see page 1)
- Development and promotion of our Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be included in school journal.
- Teachers to be given CPD in the area of restorative justice.
- Class tutors to remind students regularly of the effects of bullying.



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- Supervision and monitoring of students behaviour, including locker areas, yard, and corridors.
- Parents and students to be given a copy of examples of bullying behaviour.
- Our anti-bullying policy to be addressed each September in the welcoming of in- coming first years and their parents.
- Inclusion in the Curriculum – create awareness in a wide range of subjects.
- Anti-bullying Week – activities are planned that raise awareness and prioritise anti-bullying interventions.
- The school will address the attitudes of bullying within the school community through the administering of questionnaires to all class groups (by class tutors/SPHE teachers/RE teachers) twice a year.
- 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 and digital devices within the school.
- The Student Parliamentary Council will be involved in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime pals and other student support activities that can help to support students and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- The Student Council will discuss bullying at least twice a year.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place and in so doing foster a culture of a "telling" community which will not accept bullying as tolerable.
- 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 students' use of digital devices.
- Regarding cyber-bullying the following advice is given to students:
  - ✓ Treat your pass password like your toothbrush. It is yours and yours only.
  - ✓ Block the bully
  - ✓ Save the evidence
  - ✓ Think before you send
  - ✓ Tell a responsible adult
- Regular workshops on internet safety are provided.

This policy is consistent with other policies in Mount Sackville Secondary School:



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- Code of Behaviour
- Admission's Policy
- Child Protection
- Equality
- Internet Safety: Acceptable Use Policy
- Health and Safety
- Guidance
- Learning Support
- Supervision of students
- PE Policy
- "Dignity for all" Policy

This policy links to the following Curriculum areas

- SPHE: the issue of bullying dealt with in each of three years of Junior Cycle SPHE, CSPE (Human Rights), English (personal accounts), PE (Q of sporting exclusion) etc
- Other links could include
  - ✓ Transition Year
  - ✓ LCVP
  - ✓ Weekly assembly
  - ✓ Library literature

6. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

## Noting and Recording Incidents of Bullying.

**The relevant teacher/teachers must be consistent with the following approach. The school's procedures for dealing with reported incidents of bullying are as follows:**

- Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including students, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.



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- All reported incidents of bullying to be noted on the Bullying Incident Report form.
- Bullying Incident Report form to be filled in by the teacher to whom it was reported
- Forms to be given to the Dean.
- These forms will be stored in a secure place in the school.
- Access to the cabinet to be restricted to the Deans and/or Student Support Team and to the Principal and Deputy Principal
- Files are to be kept in the filing cabinet for 5 years after the student leaves the school

## Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any student or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher or staff member in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, the Librarian, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

## Investigating and dealing with incidents

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant) teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- As a school which promotes mutually respectful relationships and a cohesive community in our day to day interactions, the principles of restorative justice will underpin the investigation and resolution of a bullying incident. This approach is preferred in order to repair relationships and ensure the needs of all those affected are addressed.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) and students 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.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all students concerned. Students who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. However, the conversation should not begin



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with these questions. The student should be made feel at ease and the investigation should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

- The student may choose to have a friend present.
- The relevant teacher may choose to have another member of the care team present depending on the stage of the investigation.
- 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.
- 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 is important and helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, 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 students.
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to her how she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get her to see the situation from the perspective of the student being bullied.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of students and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.
- Any reported allegations of bullying/harassment between students and staff should be dealt with directly by the Principal.
- In relation to staff to staff incidents, the matter should be referred directly to the Principal where an Incident report is to be filled out. Refer also to the ASTI Grievance procedure.
- 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).

### Follow up and recording

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:



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- 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.
- Consider any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.
- 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 student who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- 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.
- 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 Students.

## 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:
- 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 on the recording template.(Appendix 1)
- Bullying incidents involving cyber-bullying must be recorded, and reported directly to the Principal.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

7. The school's programme of support for working with students affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

- The school will adopt a restorative justice approach when resolving the incident.
- The victim will receive the utmost privacy and confidentiality in the initial, and subsequent investigations. They will be given the opportunity of speaking with the Guidance Counsellor and/or the Chaplain and any member of the pastoral care team will be available to talk to them.



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- Following an investigated incident of bullying, Class Tutors, members of the Care Team and break-time Supervisors will monitor the behaviour of the students involved. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured approach.
- Deans will be informed of necessary developments in bullying incidents, at weekly staff meetings. They will be asked to monitor and observe the students or classes involved in specific incidents and to pass on these observations to the pastoral care team.
- The school will address the attitudes of bullying within the school community through the administering of questionnaires to all class groups (by class tutors/SPHE teachers/RE teachers) twice a year.
- A series of events will be organised, relating to raising awareness of bullying, during friendship week.
- Bullying will be incorporated into SPHE and Guidance lessons and reference made to it across the curriculum as appropriate.
- In a case where sanctions need to be imposed, they will be enforced, as per the school's Code of Behaviour, by the Dean of Year, Deputy Principal or the Principal.
- Parents or guardians will be informed of serious incidents and if necessary they may be required to join in the restorative based approach to resolving the issue.
- Guidance Counsellor will provide training in resilience.
- If students require counselling of further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the student affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Students 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 Students

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

## 9. 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 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.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

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 students on request) and



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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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and students on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: Gardine Renshaw  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> June '23.

Signed: Eileen Tyran  
(Principal)

Date: 15-6-23

Date of next review: 11<sup>th</sup> June '24 .



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## Appendix: Template for recording bullying behaviour

### 1. Name of student being bullied and class group

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Name(s) and class(es) of student(s) engaged in bullying behaviour


### 3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))\*

Student concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Student	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent/Guardians	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))\*

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

**\* Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.

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### 6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) \*

Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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### 9. Details of actions taken

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant Teacher) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal \_\_\_\_\_