Heywood Community School
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 Heywood Community 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 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 pupils 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 pupils; and explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic, transphobic, transgender and LGBTI+ bullying;
   - Meitheal Team 2022 suggested education on effects of bullying as a worthwhile strategy.
   - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
   - Supports for staff;
   - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
   - 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
   - identity-based bullying such as homophobic, transgender and LGBTI+ bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community, ethnic background, nationality 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 *As per Code of Behaviour re: Cyber Bullying*

   Offensive or defamatory messages or comments or photographs of students or staff members posted or sent by a student to another student or a member of staff using any form of digital technology is strictly prohibited. Circulating, publishing or distributing (including on the internet) material associated with school activities including but not limited to material in relation to staff and students where such circulation undermines, humiliates or causes damage to another person is considered a serious breach of school discipline and may result in disciplinary action. As part of such disciplinary action the Board of Management reserves the right to suspend or expel a student or students where it considers the actions to warrant such sanctions. 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.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools): The Year Head(s) (or the Principal or Deputy Principal) of the relevant students Year Group(s) concerned in the bullying report.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyberbullying 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):

    (A) All staff are encouraged to foster a culture of respect for all students and members of the school community and the unacceptability of bullying behaviour across all subject areas but particularly through the wellbeing programme for Junior Cycle and including R.S.E, S.P.H.E. and C.S.P.E. programmes.

    (B) Cyber-bullying talks are given to First Years during their Pastoral Care class. Presentations are given by outside speakers every three years where possible. Adherence to the Internet Acceptable User IT Policy is expected from all.

    (C) Annual Mental Health week for all students (commenced in 2013).

    (D) A Pastoral Care programme. Tutor per 24 students/Year Head per year group. A policy of reporting all discipline/bullying incidents through the Pastoral Care system and a weekly review in the form of a Year Head meeting attended by the Principal and Deputy Principal..

    (E) A Prefect system made up of 24 Leaving Cert students who are encouraged to monitor and report bullying among other students. Prefects make a major contribution to the student 'voice' in the school.

    (F) Meitheal group programme made up of senior students who liaise with First Year students. Meitheal leaders also contribute to the student 'voice'.

    (G) A referral system is in place where Year Heads can refer students for counselling to the school 's Guidance Counsellor and/or to the school Chaplain.

    (H) Supervision at all break times of students including supervision outside girls' and boys' toilets at break times.

    (I) Emotional and wellbeing survey with First year students from time to time.

    (J) Extra-curricular activities.

    (K) A check-in class for all students is organised through the Pastoral Care System 5/6 times during the school year (commenced 2016/2017). This is the Private Forum for each student to have a 'voice' on issues that may effect him/her personally.

    (L) A Student Council made up of one elected member from each Tutor Group is formed each year. Many student issues are discussed including bullying.

    (M) The school established a forum for 'student voice' led by a member of staff to promote and consolidate the 'student voice' in the school by bringing together representatives from the Student Council, Meitheal and the Prefects. Key student issues are discussed including bullying.

    (N) Students are encouraged to report bullying incidents. Reporting is the best strategy for continued prevention.

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). Bullying behaviour is recorded on a bullying report form by the member of staff to whom the behaviour is reported or who witnesses the behaviour. The report is then passed on to the tutor or year head of the students involved. The year head (or the Principal or Deputy Principal) in consultation with the tutor if necessary will investigate the incident or the bullying behaviour by:

  (a) Meeting the victim(s) and offender(s)

  (b) Getting both the victim and the offender to write down their version of events giving details of time, place and witnesses.

  (c) The year head or Principal or Deputy Principal will contact parents of both the victim and offender in all cases of serious bullying misbehaviour.

  (d) Both parties will then be brought together by the Year Head, Principal or Deputy Principal and encouraged to resolve their differences and move on while at the same time being made aware of

the seriousness of such behaviour as bullying. (Recommended strategy-Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools).

   (e) Each incident is reported at Year Head meetings. Records are kept on file by Year Heads of all misbehaviour. Follow up meetings are standard procedure.

   (f) Sanctions in line with Code of Behaviour.

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

     (a) Pastoral Care Programme
     (b) Prefect system
     (c) Meitheal group
     (d) A referral system - referral to counsellor or outside agencies
     (e) Guidance and Counselling and referral to Chaplain

  A policy of review is in place for all incidents of bullying with the victim(s) and the offender(s) and the parent. Contact will be made with all parties by meeting or by phone.

  A review is also carried out at Year Head meetings.

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.

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 adapted by the Board of Management on 2nd January 2014.

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 17th of November 2020.

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 18th January 2021.

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 15th March 2022.

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 16th May 2023.

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 16th September 2024.

I1. 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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils 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 parents and the Department.