School Position on Bullying

- The Mol an Óige school community believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

- The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore it does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

- Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the wellbeing of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

- The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using a 'Reform, not Blame' approach.

- All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, in or outside the school, involving members of the school community they should notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

- Pupils' participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

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 Mol an Óige Steiner NS 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) 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;

See Table A (6.1.5.Procedures): Key elements of a positive school culture and climate, and also Appendix 2: Practical tips for building a school culture and climate.

(b) Effective leadership

Principals and other leaders in the school, including all teachers, should strive to engender an ethos under which bullying is unacceptable. All who are identi-

fied as leaders within the school community can ensure that practical steps are taken to challenge and respond to bullying.

(c) A school-wide approach

A school-wide approach (involving school management, staff, parents and pupils) to dealing with the problem of bullying behaviour is a key element of effective practice. Bullying behaviour affects not only those immediately involved. It can affect everyone in the classroom, in the school and, ultimately, in the wider community.

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

The school will put in place appropriate systems to ensure that all relevant members of the school community have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour.

(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 supervision, rotas, plans for trips, special events in the school, discussion at weekly meetings

(g) Supports for staff – appropriate resources (anti-bullying support pack) and discussion at staff meetings.

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

The staff will follow the "Reform not Blame" approach as set out below.

(i)   On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

The policy will be reviewed at least once a year at a staff meeting, Board of Management meeting and at a Parent's Council meeting.

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,

- 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.*

Social Media:

The children do not have unsupervised access to internet on the school grounds. Therefore incidents of cyber bullying occur outside of school hours and are therefore outside the direct control of the school. However, if this is occurring outside of school, it is highly likely that there are repercussions within school as well. We therefore ask parents to inform the school if you are aware of any incidents of cyber bullying outside of school. The school will provide education and guidance to both children and parents as regards the risks associated with social media.

School Bus

Incidents of bullying that occur on the school bus occur outside school hours, therefore are outside the direct control of the school. These should be reported to Bus Éireann as per their anti-bullying guidelines. If a parent does report bullying to Bus Éireann then please inform the child's teacher.

Examples of bullying behaviours

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	• 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 in-

	formation 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
Relational	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours 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" • Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way
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 are as outlined in the No Blame Approach procedures.

The Relevant Teachers in this school are: Principal, Deputy Principal, all class teachers, Learning support/Resource teachers. All staff members will adopt the no blame approach to anti-bullying.

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

5. The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:

Education and prevention strategies

As a school-wide approach teachers will be implementing resources from the anti- bullying campaign

- The anti-bullying module of the SPHE programme as it applies during each school year,

- Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take.

- Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.

- Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour, either spontaneously or through questionnaires that are regularly used in the school.

- Through meetings, newsletters, website, booklets and presentations the school staff are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied.

- Through regular reports in school newsletters and other communications, as well as at meetings with parent/guardian groups, parents/guardians are regularly informed of the activities of the school.

- Staff are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bully-

ing and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the 'Relevant Teacher'(in the case of staff members) or any staff member (in the case of parents/guardians).

- Other Education and prevention strategies may be added during the year.

Links to other policies

- Code of Behaviour, Child Protection policy, Acceptable Use policy, and Attendance Policy.

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 The No Blame Approach.

6.8.9.   Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

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);

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach. Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher 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, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, E.V.S. volunteers and cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

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 is the six step approach available from the 'Dealing with Incidents' section of the Anti-Bullying Campaign website. . The approach is as follows:

1. The 'Relevant Teacher' investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, whether these take place within the school or outside it, if the behaviour is having an impact within school, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end. This investigation can include a whole class survey.

2. The School, through the 'Relevant Teacher' reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened, as part of an investigation. This does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.

3. Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the 'Relevant Teacher' to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it. In the event that they have been involved in bullying behaviour they are asked to sign a binding promise that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s).

4. The 'Relevant Teacher' does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a 'mistake' that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. **If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter**. Pupils who report bullying therefore are not getting others 'in trouble' so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continued.

5. When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the

intervention, as well as any other relevant information.

6. If a pupil has signed such a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a 'mistake.' In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed and requested to countersign their daughter/son's promise. Breach of this additional promise by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities (See sanctions below).

All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school.

Sanctions:

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be invited to a meeting with the 'Relevant Teacher', the Principal and the pupil .The case is referred to the Board of Management in line with **Step 4 and Step 5 of the Serious Misbehavior** in the Code of Behaviour and the pupil may be expelled from the school.

The Board of Management may:

- Suspend the pupil for up to 3 days.

- Suspend the Pupil for a further three days.

- Authorise a further exclusion, to a maximum of 10 days to allow for consultation with the parents /guardians.

- In exceptional cases further exclusion may be authorized to enable the matter to be reviewed.

- **Step 5** Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local

Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of education Welfare Act.

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:

  - 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) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal and staff.

- 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.

- 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 Children.

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 notify incidents witnessed by them to the relevant teacher.

- All staff must notify the relevant teacher of incidents notified to them and the relevant teacher must establish if bullying has occurred and follow the procedures as outlined below.

- 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.

Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

- The relevant teacher/s will store the records in both child's personal file that is kept locked in the office.

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher **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.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant

teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. Copies of the forms will be retained in the pupil's file.

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:
(See Section 6.8.16 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

- **Bullied pupils:**
  - Ending the bullying behaviour,
  - Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
  - Changing the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,
  - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme,
  - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
  - **Helping bullied** pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).

- **Bullying pupils:**
  - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet,'

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honorable thing and giving them praise for this,

- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),

- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,

- In dealing with negative behavior in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,

- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

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.

The school operates an effective supervision rota at break times. An adequate number of adults supervise children on outings and at special events in the school. Children are discussed at weekly meetings. Incidents of bullying will be discussed at weekly meetings and staff will be made aware of certain children when necessary for the purposes of supervision at break times.

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 _____ [date].

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. 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 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: _____   Signed: _____

      (Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date: _____   Date:

This policy has been reviewed by the staff at their weekly meeting on the 11th of November 2015. _____

Date of next review: __Sept/Oct __2016.