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 Rockwell 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 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 and transphobic bullying.
  - 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 and
- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist 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.*

4. The Relevant Teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:
   - Principal – Ms Audrey O'Byrne
   - Deputy Principal – Michael Doyle
   - Chaplain – William Ryan
   - Guidance Counsellor – Orla Cremin

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 :
   - The use of the Prefect system to facilitate a peer-to-peer support network within the College.
   - The publication of the Code of Behaviour (including the Anti-Bullying policy) in the school journal. This journal is distributed to all pupils at the start of the year.
   - The highlighting of the issue of bullying by Class Tutors at the start of each school year and at intervals as may be required
   - Using the Notes meetings to reinforce positive behaviour and caution pupils on their respect for others.
   - Use of class time to allow discussion on matters of bullying, tolerance and school supports.

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 :
   - In the event of a complaint of bullying behaviour being made or observed, the staff member will bring the issue to a Relevant Teacher.
   - Following fair and impartial investigation the Relevant Teacher will use their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred.
   - The primary aim of the Relevant Teacher is to resolve any issues and restore, as far as is practical, the relationship between the parties involved.
   - The Relevant Teacher will keep written records.
   - It will be made clear to the parties involved including parents if necessary that any sanctions are a matter for the school and the pupil being disciplined.
   - Parents will be informed and involved in investigations at the discretion of the College and in the best interests of the pupils involved.
   - The Principal will be kept informed of matters at all stages. Parents will be informed of sanctions at the earliest opportunity.

- If deemed necessary, a follow-up meeting will be arranged separately with the parties involved to assess the situation.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:
    - A meeting with the pupil affected to determine if the bullying has ceased.
    - Provision of regular meetings with Chaplain (or Guidance Counsellor) to monitor the impact of bullying and to reinforce the safety & protection of the pupil affected by bullying.
    - Observation of the relationship between the parties involved to assess the extent of the restoration of the relationship.
    - In cases where the Relevant Teacher remains concerned that there is a reoccurance of bullying behaviour, she/ he will engage with parties again.

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 adopted by the Board of Management on May 18th 2015

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 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 provide 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: *Sr. Ena Quinlan*   Signed: *Audrey O'Byrne*
   (Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date: May 18th 2015

Date of next review: May 2016