

# **Anti-Bullying Policy Holy Family Senior School**

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 Holy Family Senior 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
    - promotes respectful relationships across the school community
  - (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
    - explicitly addresses the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying;
  - (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.

4. **In Holy Family Senior School the relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is the class teacher.**

In Holy Family Senior School the class teacher, representative of behaviour support team, or teacher on duty (if the incident occurs in the playground) will investigate and deal with the incident in the first instance.

This information will be communicated to the relevant teacher.

If required, the relevant teacher will seek advice from members of the behaviour committee, the deputy principal or the principal when deciding if the behaviour constituted bullying.

**5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows**

- Weekly assemblies where the principal educates the children on issues such as diversity, respect, inclusivity and social interaction. Use of images and catch phrases to emphasise that Holy Family is a caring school and that all children have a right to be safe and happy;
- Regular whole school/group sessions on acceptable playground behaviour and school rules in Holy Family School;
- Close supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, extra-curricular activities;
- Clear and open communication between all staff members;
- Regular communication with the students' council who will monitor playground happiness;
- The Stay Safe Programme is taught in all classes;
- SPHE Curriculum will have a number of lessons that deal with ant bullying issues;
- Circle time in some classes;
- Walk Tall programme;
- RSE programme;
- Regular use of images that portray and celebrate diversity in the school;
- Working towards the yellow flag and annual celebration of intercultural day;
- Books in the class and school library that address areas such as diversity, racism;
- The incredible years programme;

- Peer mediation training for senior and junior pupils;
  - Buddy programmes in curricular areas;
  - Worry boxes in every classroom where pupils can write a note to the class teacher;
  - Anti Bullying posters visible in all parts of the school and on windows facing the playgrounds;
  - Presentations by local community Gardaí and other outside personnel to speak to classes and do workshops Pat Forde [www.stopthebully.ie](http://www.stopthebully.ie);
  - The schools anti Bullying policy will be sent to all new parents along with the Acceptable Use Policy, Mobile Phone Policy and Code of Behaviour. It will be included in the front pages of the children's homework diary;
  - The school counsellor will engage in some group mentoring work with the senior classes where necessary;
  - Resource teachers will target pupils with social difficulties and give individual and group support;
  - Pupils with special needs will use social stories to support them with peer interaction;
  - The Care team identifies pupils who are struggling socially and initiatives through Schools Completion programme and HSCL will be put in place to support these pupils;
  - Parent's information meetings will be organised to inform parents/guardians about social networking websites and cyber bullying;
  - The schools mobile phone policy will be strictly implemented by all staff.
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:**

### **Reporting bullying behaviour in Holy Family Senior School**

- 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, worry box notes 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, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

### **Guidelines for the relevant teacher investigating alleged bullying in Holy Family Senior School**

- The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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.
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant)teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether or not bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- 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;
- 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 pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;
- 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 may also be appropriate or 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 to discuss ways in which they can reinforce

or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils:

- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her 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;
- Where a pupil has been found to have engaged in bullying behaviour he /she will be encouraged to empathise with their victim. He / she will be required to sign a contract/ promise to say they will not engage in this behaviour again and bullying will stop. Depending on the severity of the incident the school's behaviour code will come into place and the pupil may be placed on a green or orange card.
- If bullying reoccurs/or there is a very serious incident, the pupil will be sanctioned in accordance with the school's behaviour policy and a red card, referral to the BOM and suspension may result.
- 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.
- At least once every school term the Principal will provide a report to the BOM setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported by means of the attached school bullying form and confirmation that all cases are being dealt with in accordance with procedures.
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with the procedures they are made aware of the school's complaints procedures. If they still remain unsatisfied with the schools interventions, they are referred to the BOM and thereafter the Ombudsman for Children.

### **Recording bullying behaviour in Holy family Senior School**

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

#### **1 Informal - pre determination that bullying has occurred.**

- **All staff must personally log or communicate any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them.**
- All incidents must be communicated to the relevant teacher
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher,
- The relevant teacher must inform the behaviour support teacher and principal of all incidents being investigated.
- The relevant teacher must personally log any reports to them.

**2 Formal Stage 1-Determination that bullying has occurred/incident report**

- When it is clear to the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must complete a school incident report form which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- These can be stored in the child's file in the classroom or in the playground books if during break times.

**3 Formal Stage 2 - Bullying established and investigated Holy Family Senior School formal bullying recording form( see attached) is used**

The relevant teacher must use the school's formal bullying recording form attached here to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- 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 school's formal bullying form is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy sent to the principal. The copy will be stored in the child's file in the classroom and the original sent to the school office for filing. This will be retained until the pupil reaches the age of 18.
- The bullying behaviour will also be logged on the school behaviour launch pad.

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

Every in school support will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying. Pupils will be given opportunities to:

- Engage in activities that raise their self-esteem i.e. small group Art/ Craft activities, gardening, helping with manual work in the school, sport, assisting young children, buddy systems, peer mentoring/mediation.
- The pupil may attend some counselling sessions with the school counsellor Ms Sylvie Sims.
- Group workshops may be set up to support bullies and victims by the school principal and Schools Completion Programme staff.

- The behaviour support teacher may provide one to one support in helping develop social skills and learning empathy.
- Class teachers may have focused circle-time activities.
- Outside school supports may be sourced through agencies such as Springboard, NEPs, CAMHs and Community Psychology.
- A structured and monitored behaviour plan may be put in place to support the pupil.
- Opportunities may be developed to allow confidential reporting for specific victims.
- Outside groups may be employed to run workshops.

#### **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 the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2014
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 (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 the patron and the Department.

Signed: Carmel Honan ( Chairperson BOM )

Date : 8<sup>th</sup> May 2014

Date of next review: May 2015

Holy Family 6<sup>th</sup> May