

## **Anti-bullying Policy**

### **Holy Family NS**

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 has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour. This policy complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013.

The Board of Management recognises the serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- a) A positive school culture and climate which:
  - i. is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
  - ii. encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
  - iii. 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 -
  - i. build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
  - ii. Explicitly address 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.

### **Definition of Bullying**

***Bullying is defined as 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:

- a) deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying, cyber-bullying and
- b) 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/private message, do not fall within the definition of bullying and will 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.

### **Fostering a positive culture in the school**

- We use School Assemblies to foster a positive school spirit in our school. We promote good behaviour through recognising achievement and presenting certificates. Children are asked to work on certain areas which helps to increase inclusivity and also awareness of the schools anti bullying policy. We acknowledge desired respectful behaviour in class and in our assemblies. Parents are the first role models for good behaviour that children have. Parents should be expected to model the standards that students are asked to respect (NEWB – Developing a Code of Behaviour). We ask parents to be aware of our policies and encourage children to be respectful and inclusive in their dealing with others.
- We actively seek parental support for anti-bullying measures/procedures through our communication with Parents Association and talks with parents during Parent Teacher meetings
- The ways in which parents and teachers interact will provide students with a model of good relationships. Appointments with teachers should be made through the school secretary. Meetings with teachers during class time would only happen in exceptional circumstances and where other supervision is available
- We encourage the use of respectful and appropriate language both in the classroom and during school activities.
- Class teachers teach school and class rules and start the beginning of each school year. Assemblies are used to promote particular aspects of school rules.
- We recognise that we are living in a digital community. We all need to be aware of the dangers of inappropriate usage of phones and ICT. With that in mind all social media sites are blocked in the school and mobile phones are not allowed in the school. It is the responsibility of parents to monitor their children's use of technology and we strongly recommend this. To assist parents, internet safety talks may be organised. We provide adequate supervision during break time. A rota is drawn up and displayed in the staff room. 2 teachers and 2 SNA's are on duty each break time.
- All staff will actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour. Staff are encouraged to tell the class teacher of concerns about children in the classroom.
- Through our education programme we make clear to pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are acting responsibly and are not telling tales.

### **Education and Prevention Strategies.**

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

- Anti bullying lessons in accordance with the S.P.H.E. Programme from Junior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class explicitly teaching respectful language and respectful behaviour
- The Stay Safe Lessons on bullying which focus on the different types of bullying and what to do if bullied will be taught every second year
- Our RE programme embraces themes that encourage inclusion and tolerance.
- Oral work in all subjects to promote self-esteem and enhance relationships – especially in the area of SPHE.

- The Webwise Education programme is used in the senior classes.

### **Procedures in reporting**

We aim to encourage an environment in our school where children can openly report incidents to their class teacher or any adult. Our Anti Bullying Policy will adopt the same procedures as our Code of Behaviour and our Complaints Procedure.

- The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with an allegation of bullying, in the first instance, will normally be the class teacher. Children will be encouraged to approach their class teacher with incidents of bullying.
- Incidents on the school yard will be reported to the teacher on duty on the yard. The teacher will then report the incident to the class teacher and in more serious incidents to the principal.
- If the situation cannot be resolved by the class teacher it may be referred to the principal. Serious acts of bullying may be referred to the BOM.
- An allegation of bullying may be raised with any teacher in the school. The teacher should refer the incident to the class teacher. Teachers will take appropriate measures regarding allegations in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.

### **Procedures for Investigation**

. 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:

- Our primary aim is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved rather than to apportion blame;
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with.
- Non-teaching staff are encouraged to report incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them to the relevant teacher;
- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.
- Parents 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 between children as quickly as possible;
- Teachers will take a calm, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- Interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned;
- If a group is involved, each member may be interviewed individually or asked to write down their account of the incident(s) or met as a group. At the group meeting, each member may 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 will be supported through possible pressures from the other members of the group after an interview;

- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy).
- 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;
- **Any disciplinary sanctions are a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school and are dealt with in accordance with the schools behaviour policy;**
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may 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.
- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the appropriate recording template;
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher will, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
  - a) Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
  - b) Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
  - c) Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
  - d) Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

The [Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 \(Children First\)](#) and the [Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools](#) provide that in situations where "the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan".

Serious instances of bullying behaviour will in accordance with the Children First and [the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools](#), be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardai as appropriate.

### **Recording of bullying allegations and procedures**

A template has been agreed for recording allegations. Completed templates will be kept in the child's file.

## **Supporting those effected by bullying**

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

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by the school within the limits of resources available through the provision of opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed. Where appropriate and available a referral for counselling may be made through NEPS.

Support for pupils involved in bullying behaviour will also be provided by the school within the limits of resources available. For those with low self-esteem this will include opportunities to increase feelings of self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may be referred for counselling where appropriate and available to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

## **Supervision of Pupils**

A timetable for supervision on the yard is in place. 2 teaching staff and 2 SNA's (under our current allocation) are on yard each break. This procedure helps us to observe children at play and to deal with any issues as they arrive.

## **Equality**

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.

## **Supports for Staff**

Staff are made aware of in-service opportunities available in the local Education Centre. In School support will also be sought as required – NEPS, PDST. Personal support is available through Carecall for teaching staff.

## **Adoption by BOM**

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management in November 2014

## **Communication**

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.

## **Ongoing evaluation**

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:** Sr Mary Richardson

**(Chairperson of BOM)**

**30<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

**Signed:** Bernadette Ryan

**(Principal)**