Holy Family Community School

Education is Opportunity

Anti-Bullying Policy

Title:	Anti-Bullying Policy
Approved by:	The Board of Management
Date:	30th November 2022
Responsibility for implementation:	The Board of Management and the Principal
Policy Review Date:	30th November 2023

Vision Statement

Our vision statement sees our school as a community of students, staff, parents and the Board of Management.

We are committed to developing a community of learners. We believe that education provides opportunity for all. We nurture the well-being of all so that they may grow in knowledge and compassion. We strive to provide a school that promotes academic excellence and enables all students to realise their full potential. Our programmes, curricular and extra-curricular, develop the whole person. These educational objectives are achieved through partnership with parents, national schools and the local community.

Introduction:

This policy was developed within the framework of the school's Code of Behaviour and it is in keeping with the school's vision statement. This policy complies with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools published by the NEWB (2008) and Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools published by the Department of Education and Skills (2013). It was drawn up in consultation with students, parents and staff and it was adopted by the Board of Management on 30th November 2022.

The school recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on students. The school is 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 students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment.
    - promotes respectful relationships across the entire 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 students; and
    - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of students.
- Supports for staff.
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies.
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

Our school's statement on bullying:

- Every person in our school is entitled to respect, fair treatment and to be free of any type of bullying.
- Our school will work proactively, as far as it can, to ensure that bullying does not take place.
- Reporting incidents of bullying is responsible behaviour.
- A record will be kept of all reported incidents of bullying.
- Incidents of bullying will be investigated and dealt with seriously.
- Our school has a programme of support for both the bully and the bullied.
- Appropriate action will be taken to ensure that bullying does not continue.

What is 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.

Types of bullying behaviour include:

- **Physical aggression** including pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking, tripping, biting, scratching, spitting, hair-pulling, throwing objects, beatings, mock fights and severe physical assault.
- **Intimidation** including threats of physical abuse, use of aggressive or obscene language, aggressive body language, facial expression conveying aggression and/or dislike, offensive/intimidating gestures.
- **Extortion** including demands for money, lunches, books, equipment, property. A student may be forced into theft of property by the bully.
- **Interference or damage to property** including clothing, mobile phone or other electronic devices, learning materials, locker, bicycle. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
- **Verbal abuse** including name-calling, offensive comment or joke, an attack by rumour, gossip, innuendo or ridicule on any individual's reputation.
- **Cyber-bullying** including silent or abusive telephone / mobile phone calls, abusive text / picture messages, abusive email / website, instant messaging, apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms or social media site messages.
- **Exclusion / isolation** and other relational bullying including writing insulting remarks about a student in public places, passing around notes/drawings of a student, whispering insults about a pupil loud enough to be heard, ganging up against one student, the "silent treatment".
- **Identity based bullying** including homophobic and transphobic bullying, racist bullying, harassment based on any of the following: gender (including transgender), civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.
- A **combination** of any of the types of bullying listed.

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 will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour and Discipline.

Procedures for reporting an incident of Bullying Behaviour
• The student who is being bullied **should tell** someone. The student should talk to someone they feel comfortable in telling i.e. their Year Head, Class Tutor, a Staff member, their Parents, a Mentor or a Senior Student.
• The person to whom the incident has been reported should write a report and inform the relevant Year Head.
• The staff member who has been informed, may talk to the student(s) involved and document the incident. All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, should be noted, investigated and dealt with by teachers.
• All students involved should provide a written report of the incident.
• A member of the Senior Management Team should be informed.
• The Deputy Principal / Year Head may make contact with the parents/guardians of both the student who has bullied and the victim of bullying as quickly as possible.
• Appropriate sanctions may then be implemented.
• The Guidance Counsellor may act as a support to all involved at any of the above stages.
• The student or person who reports the incident should be notified that the situation has been investigated.
• A record will be kept of all bullying incidents.

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying
• Teachers should take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by students, staff or parents/ guardians. When investigating incidents of bullying behaviour answers to questions of what, where, when, who, why, will be sought. This should be done in a calm manner, with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all students concerned.
• These incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation.
• The teacher should speak separately to the students involved, in an attempt to get all sides of the story.
• Students who are not directly involved may also provide information.
• If it is concluded that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, they will be deemed to be in breach of our Code of Behaviour.
• Parents / Guardians of both parties involved may be informed of actions taken by the school and asked to support the school.

Prevention of bullying:

Our school will endeavour to prevent bullying by means of:

- Staff, parents / guardians and students being vigilant for signs of bullying.
- Applying a school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- Encouraging students to report incidences of bullying to any member of staff.
- Encouraging parents to contact the school early with concerns re bullying.
- Raising awareness through education programmes such as Wellbeing time, SPHE, RE and CSPE programmes, year group assemblies, guest speakers / workshops / drama groups, discussion initiated by the pastoral care team.
- Implementing a Restorative Practice approach which aims to build positive relationships and friendships, helping to deal with conflict in a healthy way that moves us away from blame and attack to connection and healing.
- Ensuring that there are opportunities for staff to engage in professional development re bullying.
- Fostering a pastoral – focused programme based on the Indicators of Wellbeing.
- Having a caring pastoral care team including teachers, Tutors, Year Heads, Chaplain, Guidance Counsellors, Mentors for first year students, Buddies for other new students.
- Having an established Student Support Team (SST) who meet on a weekly basis.
- Involving the Student Council and Mentors in contributing to a safe and supportive school environment.
- Promoting positive mental health, self esteem and resilience through guest speakers / workshops / drama groups, curricular and extracurricular activities. These themes are additionally highlighted in our annual Wellbeing Week organised by our school's Amber Flag Committee, as well as marking Stand Up Awareness Week each year.
- Promoting a class programme tailored to class problems with persistent bullying.
- A Digital Media Literacy class for first year students which helps to prevent Cyberbullying by educating students on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online and developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyberbullying.
- Offering appropriate counselling to students who have been bullied and encouraging them to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their social skills and to build their resilience e.g. extracurricular activities.
- Promoting positive behaviour including a merit card system for all year groups.
- Supervising appropriately at break times.

Supervision and Monitoring of Students:

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.

Prevention of Harassment:

The Employment Equality Acts 1998-2011 define harassment as "unwanted conduct" which is related to any of the 9 discriminatory grounds above. Sexual harassment is any form of "unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature". In both cases it is defined as conduct which "has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person".

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 students or staff or the harassment of students 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.

Communication of this policy:

This policy has been made available to students, staff, parents / guardians, Students' Council, Parents' Association and the Board of Management. This policy is available on the school website and a hard copy of policy is available on request from the school's office. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the school's Trustees if requested.

Reporting:

At least once in every school term the Principal provides a report to the Board of Management setting out:

- The overall number of bullying cases since the previous report to the Board.
- Confirmation that all reported cases have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.*

Annual Review:

The Board of Management, Staff, Parents' Association and Students' Council will be involved in reviewing this policy and its implementation once in every school year. The reviewed Policy will be made available to staff, the Students' Council and the Parents' Association, be published on the school's website and be available from the school's office. The Board of Management minutes will reflect the updated Policy.

This Anti-Bullying Policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Holy Family Community School on 15th November 2022.

Signed: _____   Date: _____

　　　　Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____   Date: _____

         Principal/Secretary, Board of Management

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 1 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____Class_____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

_____

_____

_____

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9.   Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)   Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

* Note: The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.

Checklist for Annual Review of the antibullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

	Yes/No
1. Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?	
2. Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
3. Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
4. Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
5. Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
6. Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
7. Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
8. Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
9. Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
10. Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
11. Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	

	Yes/No
12. Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
13. Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
14. Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
15. Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
16. Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
17. Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

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Chairperson

Board of Management

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Secretary

Board of Management

Date

To: Holy Family Community School Stakholders

The Board of Management of *Holy Family Community School* wishes to inform you that:

- o The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of 30th November 2022.

- o This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.*

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Chairperson

Board of Management

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Secretary

Board of Management