

Anti-Bullying Policy

Holy Trinity NS

1. The anti-bullying policy of Holy Trinity NS Board of Management is framed to comply with and serve our school's mission, ethos and overall code of behaviour. It accords with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the guidelines issued by the NEWB, and the terms of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* document published in September 2013.

2. The Board of Management recognises the serious nature of bullying and the negative impact it can have on the lives of pupils. It is therefore committed to the following 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, 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 defined as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons), and repeated over time. The following behaviours are included:

- 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 in accordance with the school's general 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.

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 for investigating and dealing with bullying is as follows:
 - The class teacher initially
 - The principal teacher thereafter if necessary
5. The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):
 - Friendship Week - A week in February where focus throughout the school is on anti-bullying.
 - Assembly - Weekly whole school assemblies are an opportunity to raise awareness.
 - SPHE - Walk Tall, Stay Safe and RSE programmes are taught throughout the school.
 - Webwise - The Webwise lessons will be taught from 1st to 6th class
 - Buddy Systems.
 - Peer tutoring and shared reading.
 - Time allotted to each staff-meeting to discuss observations and concerns.
 - Weekly timetabled teacher/ learning support meetings.

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 (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

Report

- A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to the school.
- A teacher may notice bullying behaviour.

Respond

- Incidents and reports of bullying are initially dealt with by the class teacher. The class teacher may consult with the Principal at any time. Incidents of a serious nature are referred to the Principal.
- On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher dealing with the report will first interview the victim(s). The relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who, why. An interview will then take place with the alleged perpetrator(s). These interviews should take place outside of class to ensure the privacy of all concerned, and in an age appropriate way. The teacher may ask the children involved to write or draw about the event/s. If the bullying involves a group of pupils, members of that group will first be met individually and then as a whole.
- The class teacher may consult with the Principal.

Record

- If it is established that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher will keep appropriate written records, including children's accounts of the events.

Resolve

- The parents of each child involved will be informed at an early stage and asked to meet the teacher to discuss the matter. In that meeting
 - a summary narrative of the incident is given,
 - the negative impact which bullying has on both perpetrator(s) and victim(s) is emphasised,
 - appropriate steps to resolve the difficulty are discussed,
 - the help of parents is enlisted to ensure that it does not happen again.
 - The purpose of the exercise is to raise consciousness, resolve the issues, restore the child's or the children's confidence and, as far as practicable, restore and improve the relationships of those involved.
- Repeated bullying behaviour will result in the imposition of sanctions. Such sanctions will be proportionate to the seriousness of the behaviour. The sanctions and interventions used at Holy Trinity NS are in our school's Code of Behaviour.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required is a private

matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.

- Follow-up meetings with the relevant adults and children may be arranged if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. If appropriate, and the parents of both the child who bullied and of the child who was bullied may be invited to meet together at a later date.

Review

- Where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that the bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at Appendix 3.
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case properly, he or she will be referred 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 must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

- Pupils who have been bullied may need counselling and/or need opportunities to participate in activities to raise self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed. A buddy system may be set up. Teachers may organise activities to ensure inclusion. At break times the teacher will ensure the pupil is interacting with others and enjoying playtime.
- Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an on-going basis. They will take part in classroom activities to raise self worth and esteem. They will be given opportunities to experience positive play and interaction with others. The RE and SPHE programmes will play an important role in supporting the pupil/s who have bullied others.
- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying will be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

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.

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 reviewed and updated policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 14th December 2016.

11. This policy is 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: _____ Date: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Date of next review: 2023