

Holy Family NS Anti-Bullying Policy

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and developing Code of Behaviour Guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Holy Family NS 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.

The Board of Management and Staff of Holy Family NS recognise 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:

Strategies to prevent and tackle bullying

Creation of 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.

Strategies for building a positive school culture and climate

- Modelling respectful behaviour by all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.

- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school. Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.

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.

Definition and types of Bullying

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
- 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.

Types of bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

Physical aggression: This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

Intimidation: Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying: This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard.

Cyber-bullying: This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

Name calling: Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.

Damage to property: Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

Extortion: Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

Indicators of bullying behaviour

The following signs and symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school e.g. requesting parents to drive or collect him/her, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school;
- Unwillingness to go to school, fear of going out to the yard, refusal to attend, truancy;
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- Pattern of physical illnesses e.g. headaches, stomach aches;
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays;
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g. stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting;
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers;
- Possessions missing or damaged;
- Increased requests for money or stealing money;
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing; and
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.
- There may be other signs depending on the individual and his/her circumstances. The above signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied but if repeated or occurring in combination, these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.
- Unexplained absences.
- Becoming isolated in the class.
- May begin to bully other smaller children.

Investigating and Dealing with bullying behaviour

The relevant teacher for dealing with and investigating bullying will be the class teacher. He/She will be supported by Mr Mc Groary

Education and prevention strategies

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:

- Developing a whole school Anti Bullying Policy in collaboration with the whole school community based on Department of Education Anti-bullying procedures for Primary and Post Primary for September 2013.
- The Anti-bullying Policy and Schools Code of Behaviour will be available on line.

- A hard copy of both will be available on request from the school office.
- Ensuring that all school activities both in school and out of school are adequately supervised and monitored by school staff.
- Applying sanctions for misbehaviour in a fair and consistent manner by all teachers (follow Code of Behaviour Policy).

Creation of a Culture of Telling:

- Create a culture of telling **'We are a telling school'**.
- Teachers should repeatedly reinforce the message that if anyone is a victim of bullying behaviour they should not retaliate but that they should let an adult, teacher/sna/secretary/parent etc know.
- Pupils/victims/bystanders/parents should be reassured that if they tell of an incident it will be dealt with.
- All pupils will be encouraged to develop empathy, respect and resilience and to understand the causes and effects of bullying behaviour. This will be done through awareness lessons throughout the year at least one per term. In this way pupils are helped to examine the issues of bullying in a calm, rational way outside of the tense context of a particular bullying incident.
- Self esteem and Self- worth will be developed through curricular and extra curricular programmes

Education and Prevention Programmes will focus on positive behaviour, being kind to others, telling someone, promoting respect for diversity and inclusiveness.

- Stay Safe. (programme which promotes personal safety skills)
- Alive O Programmes.
- Walk Tall.
- RSE
- Friendship Programme.
- Prim-Ed Publications (conflict and resolution).
- The Anti-Bullying Modules of the SPHE Curriculum which explores bullying as well as inter related of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.
- www.antibullyingireland.com.
- Visual Aids will reinforce anti-bullying and positive behaviour messages delivered in class. Posters, both pupil designed and commercial will be displayed in the school.
- Opportunities for curricular integration and cross-curricular, Art, Drama, PE, and group approaches will be used to foster a wider understanding of the positive and negative effects of behaviour.

- Participation in sporting activities can provide excellent opportunities for challenging behaviour and learning how to control aggression.
- Literacy opportunities will be availed of to draw attention to causes and the effects of conflict.
- Promotion of self-esteem through highlighting achievements both academic and non academic (in school and outside) will be encouraged in every class.
- Celebration of individual achievements will be acknowledged in the class, at school assemblies, in the newsletter, notice boards, and school website. We provide opportunities for success and we acknowledge and reward good behaviour.
- Strategies and programmes to prevent cyber bullying:
 - The school internet is protected by NCTE Content Filtering which regular updates to prevent access to unsuitable sites and social media sites.
 - Pupils are not allowed to bring mobile phones to school.
 - All I.T equipment is used to facilitate the teaching and learning in the school.
 - The school has an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) in place.
 - Education awareness measures aimed at middle and senior classes which focus on cyber bullying will identify appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe on line and how to report any concerns. (See HSE Guidelines).
 - Parents are recommended to report incidents of cyber bullying to the service provider through its Customer Care or Report Abuse Facility.
 - If Cyber bullying is very serious and potentially criminal parents are advised to contact the Gardai.
- Strategies and programmes to prevent identity based bullying:
 - Creating an inclusive school environment.
 - Celebrating Diversity.
 - Exploration of Identity based themes through class novels.
 - Zero Tolerance with regard to name calling.
 - Other curricular areas history, e.g. identity based themes. Anti apartheid, Geography Strand Unit: People and other places.

Procedures for Investigating, follow up and Recording of bullying behaviour

1. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
2. Other school personnel (e.g. SNA's School Secretary, Caretaker, Cleaner, Visiting Specialist teachers, Student Teachers) will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

3. Claims of bullying of a pupil must be brought, in the first instance, to the relevant class teacher. If another pupil in the school is involved, 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.
4. 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 of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
5. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved. The class teacher will seek the help of the support teacher in place in each building.
6. It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the approach outlined at (1 – 5) above, from the outset.
7. Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
8. Incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
9. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. The pupils who are not directly involved (bystanders) can also provide very useful information and may be asked for their version of events.
10. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
11. If a group is involved, each member will, where practicable, be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for her/his account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements. It may also be appropriate to ask those involved to write down their accounts of the incidents. This does not necessarily mean that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.
12. The group will be supported, if necessary, through the possible pressures that they may face after interview, by the teacher.
13. In cases where it has been established that a bullying behaviour has occurred the parents/guardians will be met separately with the Principal, class teacher/support teacher. The class teacher will outline the results of the investigation and explain the action being taken and the reason. Parents will be given an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce the school's strategies and support the pupils involved.

Action

14. Holy Family NS will utilise a restorative practice approach in its initial stage of resolving the situation (**except in single serious incidents of bullying behaviour/intentional negative behaviour**

when the schools sanctions will be applied immediately).

15. The perpetrator will give a verbal undertaking to stop the intentional bullying behaviour in the presence of his/her parents, class teacher, Principal /support teacher. It is hoped that the perpetrator will see that he/she has done wrong and that an apology will be given to the victim.
16. Going forward school staff will monitor and evaluate the situation. Support will be provided to both victim and perpetrator if deemed necessary.
17. Follow up meetings will be arranged separately with the relevant parties (pupils and parents) to see if the situation has been resolved.
18. If the behaviour reoccurs the perpetrator will be informed that he/she has broken their verbal contract and that they are now being asked to sign a formal written contract stating that the behaviour will end now. This is a final warning (**except in single serious incidents of bullying behaviour, when the schools sanctions will be applied immediately**). Both sets of Parents will be sent for to explain the situation now. The parents of the perpetrator will be asked to counter sign the written contract in the presence of their child.
19. Going forward school staff will monitor and evaluate the situation. Support will be provided to both victim and perpetrator if deemed necessary.
20. Breach of this contract by continuing the bullying behaviour will now be considered as a serious breach of Schools Code of Behaviour and sanctions will be applied as appropriate.
21. In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed **within 20 days after** after the written Contract has been entered into, he/she will complete Appendix 3. **Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour.**
22. In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed, the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account.
 1. Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased.
 2. Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable.
 3. Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable, and
 4. Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.
23. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's Complaints Procedures.
24. In the event that a parent has exhausted the schools Complaint Procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Procedures for Noting/Recording Bullying Behaviour.

25. The class teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of reports of bullying behaviour.
26. If it is established by the class teacher and support teacher that bullying has occurred the class teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist in the effort to resolve the issues.
27. The notes should be brief, factual and void of emotion or judgemental language.
28. In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed **within 20 days after** after the written Contract has been entered into, he/she will complete Appendix 3. **Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour.**
29. **Summary Reports to the Board of Management:** At each Board of Management meeting the Principal will provide a report setting out the following:
 - (a) the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template at **Appendix 3**) since the previous report to the Board and
 - (b) confirmation that all cases referred to at (i) above 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*.

The Schools Programme of Support for Working with Pupils effected by bullying is as follows:

Victim support:

- Ending the bullying behaviour.
- Empathising with the victim.
- Helping victims raise their self- esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendship and social skills and build resilience – group work, sports activities etc.
- Staged Approach. Class Support, School Support as per Continuum Behavioural Emotional and Social Difficulties.
- Where deemed necessary the child in consultation with parents/guardian and teacher may be referred for counselling.
- Drama Therapy/Play Therapy sessions may be recommended.
- External Agencies maybe involved e.g. NEPS, CAMHS, HSE.

Perpetrator support

- Input from Special Education Team, Behaviour Plan.
- Empathy awareness needs to be developed.
- The child may be referred for counselling in consultation with the parent.
- Clinical referral may be necessary.
- The Staged Approach as above may be applied.
- In certain cases it may be necessary to invite assistance from Gardaí (Junior Liaison Officer).

Incidents of bullying can extend beyond the school and the journey to and from school. The school cannot be responsible for dealing with incidents that happen outside the school grounds but will make reasonable efforts to co-operate with parents/guardians in assisting them to resolve the issues.

Annual Review by the Board of Management.

- (a) The Board of Management will undertake an annual review of the school’s anti- bullying policy and its implementation by the school. **Appendix 4 will be completed.**
- (b) 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 standardised notification which will be used for this purpose and is included at **Appendix 4.** A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

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.

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.

Ratification

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ .

This policy has been made available to school personnel and is available to parents/guardians and pupils on request and provided to the Parents’ Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3 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

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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

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9. Details of actions taken

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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.

Appendix 4 Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying 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
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents’ association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
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?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
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?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school’s handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school’s handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school’s handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
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?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school’s policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: _____

The Board of Management of _____ wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of _____ [date].
- 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*.

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____