

Holy Spirit BNS

Anti-Bullying Policy

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 Spirit BNS 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. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school code of behaviour.
3. 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 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 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.

4. 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.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

5. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

The relevant class teacher(s) of the pupils involved in the alleged incident (s)

The Principal and/or Deputy Principal

6. 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

- The specific Social Personal Health and Education programmes in use in our school, to raise an awareness of bullying, and counter measures are " Walk Tall " ; " Stay Safe " ; the RSE programme, Show Racism the Red Card (which covers homophobic bullying), The Incredible Years.
- Selected lessons from Prim-Ed e-books on Cyber bullying in the second term and from webwise.ie which is aimed at cyber bullying.
- These may change as new material becomes available.
- Other subjects also covered are Personal Space, Individuality, and Respect.
- For parents - Cyberbullying courses and information on internet safety courses and parenting courses will be made available.

- Circle time, role plays will be used to explore the theme of bullying and to identify approaches to dealing with various situations that children may find themselves in.
- In a situation where chronic bullying has been identified, intensive curricular intervention may be employed.
- Staff, pupils, parents and BoM will be made aware of issues surrounding cyber-bullying through the use of appropriate awareness raising exercises.
- Pupils will learn about cyber-bullying through SPHE, assemblies, friendship week activities and other curricular learning.
- The school will engage speakers and work with community agencies (e.g. An Garda Síochána) to facilitate workshops/discussion on cyberbullying for 5th and 6th class and parents on a regular basis.
- Pupils will sign an acceptable use of ICT contract in 5th and 6th class.
- Pupils and parents will be encouraged to report all incidents of cyberbullying to the school.
- All incidents of cyber bullying will be investigated, recorder and reported to the Gardaí as required.

The aim of curricular intervention is as follows –

- To help children develop an awareness of what happens in social situations and to provide practice in the skills need to cope effectively.
- To heighten the self-esteem of children by providing opportunities to improve their relationship with others.
- To encourage pupils to formulate positive goals

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:

When the contact person has established that bullying is taking place the following procedures will be used. All other incidents will be dealt with **as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.**

All incidents of bullying behaviour will be investigated and recorded on the "Recording Bullying Behaviour Form". The contact person which in the first instance is the class teacher will:

Attend to the safety needs of the victim

Acknowledge what the person says

Listen attentively and record factual information

Use a standardised reporting form as agreed

Follow agreed procedures

Investigating/Reporting of bullying:

The school has clear procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying and these are set out here in the school's anti-bullying policy. The school's procedures must be consistent with the following:

Step 1 – 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 (rather than to apportion blame). Interview the pupil who has been bullied. If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first.

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;

When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should 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.

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. It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.

Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents. Incidents are generally best 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;

Step 2 - 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 they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).

Step 3 - In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents 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 parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their 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.

Step 4 - It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.

Step 5 - Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should 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. This can have a therapeutic effect.

Step 6 - 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 recording template. The template must be retained by the Principal for future reference.

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:

Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased.

Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable.

Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable.

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 must 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 must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

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

Support for victim and other groups as part of 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 listed in point 5 above.

The aim of this curricular intervention is to allow opportunities for pupils to explore alternative strategies appropriate to the bullying situation they currently face or of previous situations where they would have liked to handle a situation differently.

If it is the view of teachers and principals that the child would benefit from professional counselling then their parents/guardians will be given the option to refer them to the appropriate service(s).

7. 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.

8. 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.

- 9.** This policy has been made available to school personnel and published on the school website. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.
- 10.** 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.

11. This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 22nd May 2023