

SACRED HEART B.N.S

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Revised 19th September, 2016

An abstract graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of several overlapping, semi-transparent 3D rectangular blocks. The blocks are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and perspective. The colors of the blocks are muted, including shades of blue, grey, and light blue. The lighting appears to come from the top-left, casting soft shadows and highlighting the edges of the blocks.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Sacred Heart Boys National School

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 (BOM) of Sacred Heart Boys National School (BNS) has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. The policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.
2. *The school has sought advice from NEPS and the P.D.S.T. in drawing up this policy. It has been written with the ultimate aim of resolving any issues which may arise in the area of bullying. However, we are not legal practitioners and while we use the policy as a guideline in all our deliberations, it may not always be a perfect fit. In some cases, we the (Sacred Heart) reserve the right to delay moving to a stage, as outlined, and instead use our professional judgement to further implement some of the strategies outlined in the "P.D.S.T. Resource Materials Handbook" in order to facilitate, resolve and repair the issues between the parties involved.*
3. The Board of Managements 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 in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour. A cornerstone in the prevention of bullying is a positive school culture and climate that is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity and respect. The key elements of a positive culture and climate in Sacred Heart B.N.S. are as follows:
 - The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
 - The school acknowledges the uniqueness of individual and his/her worth as a human being.
 - The school promotes the positive habits of respect, fairness and equality among all its members.
 - The school promotes effective leadership that enables the school to change in response to pupils' needs.
 - The school identifies aspects of the curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
 - The school recognises the need to work with parents and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school wide basis.
 - The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life skills.
4. In accordance with the *Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* **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

- Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying
- Cyber bullying.
- Identity based bullying such as homophobic bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the travelling 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 will be dealt with as 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.

5. **The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying** are the class teacher, Mrs. Brennan, Deputy Principal, Mr. Murphy, Principal. The relevant LSRT teacher will also be involved with the specific class and/or pupil. Any teacher may act as the relevant teacher if the circumstances warrant it.
6. **The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying)will be as follows:**

Creation of a culture of “telling”.

The school encourages and advocates a culture of telling. The school's Anti-Bullying statement is “Bullying is wrong and is not tolerated in the Sacred Heart B.N.S. We are a telling school.” This message is displayed in prominent positions around the school environs.

Teachers should repeatedly reinforce the message that if anyone is the victim of bullying behaviour, they should not retaliate in any way, but they should tell an adult. Victims should be reassured that if they tell, something will be done about the bullying in a safe manner and all reported incidents will be dealt with.

There is a particular emphasis place on the importance of bystanders as they can be the key to identifying and reporting bullying. It will be explained this is not telling tales, but a means of protecting their fellow pupils.

The aim is that, in time, pupils will gain confidence in telling and learn that they can make a positive difference.

To achieve this “telling” culture, pupils will be taught who to tell and how to tell e.g.

- A direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, e.g. at break times, before school, after class.
- Hand note up with homework.
- Make a phone call to the school.
- Tell a teacher, S.N.A., coach, friend you trust in school.
- Get a parent/guardian or friend to tell on your behalf.
- Administer a confidential questionnaire to a class or focus group during the school year.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- The development of an ‘Acceptable Use Policy’ in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils’ use of mobile phones.

Raising awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour by

- Displaying the school’s Anti-Bullying statement in prominent places around the school environment.
- A specific lesson in Bullying will be taught at the start of each school term in all classes. This lesson will be base around the following questions:
 - What is bullying?
 - What is not bullying?
 - What to do if you see someone else being bullied?
- Engaging in formal teaching within the class setting through ~S.P.H.E., R.E., website and stay safe programmes.
- This year the “Anti-Bullying Campaign” lessons will be piloted in classes 2nd to 6th between January and June. A review of this initiative will then take place.
- Using our annual Friendship/Anti Bullying week to raise awareness of bullying related issues.

Other strategies

- Formal programmes of work are a vital element in raising children’s self-esteem and equipping children to cope with bullying behaviour e.g. RE, RSE, Alive-O, Webwise, Stay Safe.
- The introduction of self-assessment for learning folders (S.A.L.F.) in all classes Junior Infants – 6th, to help build pupils’ self-esteem, independence and to foster a climate of respect for diversity among all pupils.

- Positive reinforcement by teachers in classroom setting (Class dojo, students of the week, pupil of the month, pupil of the year, golden time, spot prizes, stars, stickers etc.)
- Modelling and reinforcement of respectful behaviour and language by teachers and staff.
- Promotion of extra-curricular activities which encourages co-operation among pupils (sports – Gaelic football, hurling, soccer, table-tennis, basketball, athletics, choirs, book clubs, art & crafts club etc.)
- Adopting and displaying the school’s Anti-Bullying statement and other related slogans around the school environment.
- Encouraging students to look out for each other and to be responsible for their own behaviour.
- Use Assembly time to further promote and enhance this culture of mutual respect in our school relationships.
- Immediate affirmation of children who report incidents of bullying which they have witnessed.
- Circle-time sessions, role-play, Social Stories, Board games, video clips, children’s books and poetry are methodologies which are used to discuss and explore issues of bullying.
- Each class to have a set of class rules which complement the school’s Code of Behaviour.
- A Friendship/Anti-Bullying Week to be held in late September each year to include each child taking the school’s Anti-Bullying pledge.
- Homework diary to contain salient points from the school’s Behaviour Policy. Pupils and parents/guardians to sign this diary page each September to indicate acceptance of these rules (1st to 6th classes).
- Homework diary to contain the school’s Anti-Bullying Statement and Anti-Bullying Pledge. Pupils and parents/guardians to sign this Anti-Bullying Pledge each September to indicate awareness and acceptance of the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Ensure supervision at all times when pupils can access the internet in school.
- Sanctions for unauthorised use of the internet/electronic devices will be imposed as per the Code of Behaviour and Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).
- All teachers to do a lesson on internet safety to coincide with Internet Safety Day. Classes 1st – 6th engage in Internet Safety Week activities and lessons from ‘Webwise’.
- Highlight school’s Anti-Bullying Policy and strategies at annual ‘Parents/Guardians Evening’ in September
- Post school’s Anti-Bullying Policy and Statement on school website

Procedure for investigating and dealing with bullying

The primary aim 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).

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parents/guardians) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting Bullying Behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff, (e.g. secretary, caretaker, S.N.A. etc.) must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Investigating and dealing with incidents

- In investigating and dealing with alleged bullying, the relevant teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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.
- Investigation(s) will take a calm, problem-solving approach outside the classroom to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information.
- The relevant teacher will seek answers to the questions of what, where, who and why.
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually first. Thereafter, all those involved should meet as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- Each member of the group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from other members of the group after the interview by the teacher. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those to write down their account of the incident(s).
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) 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). This should give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions been taken by the school and the support provided to pupils.
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him how he is in breach of the school's Anti-Bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.

Incidents of alleged bullying will be dealt with on a staged basis.

Stage 1

- All reports of alleged bullying will be dealt with initially by the class teacher.
- Once made aware of an alleged bullying incident, the teacher will interview both sides (individually) in an attempt to gather all the facts. Interviews will take place using the questions who? What? When? Where? Why? This will be recorded on an interview sheet.
- In investigating and dealing with an alleged incident, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement in consultation with other relevant teacher(s) to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best to resolve the situation. All avenues to achieve a resolution will be explored.
- The aim for the class 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.
- Parents of both parties will be informed of the bullying incident (if it is established) by the class teacher.
- It is explained to the alleged bully how hurtful their behaviour is and attempts are made to encourage them to empathise with the victim.
- The child/children involved will be told that they have been placed on Stage 1 of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Stage 2

- If this child breaks the pledge and re-offends, then the Deputy Principal with the class teacher will interview the child/children again. It is explained to them that this is their second time offending and that they have not kept their promise. Once again attempts will be made to resolve the situation. The parents will also be required to take part in the resolution process and to co-sign the pledge with their child. They are now advised that if they break this promise again, they will have a meeting with the Principal and their parents in the office and could face suspension.

Stage 3-

- If a child breaks their promise twice then the matter is referred to the Principal. The Principal meets with the child and the parents. If the behaviour reoccurs after this stage, sanctions up to and including three days suspension from the class or school will be considered. The Principal has the permission from the Board of Management to take this action.

Recording of incidents: All incidents will be logged by class teacher and incidents which have not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days will be recorded by the class teacher on the recording template as in Appendix 3 (*Anti bullying Procedures for Primary and Post –Primary Schools*). This template will be completed in full and a copy given to the Deputy Principal and Principal. At least once every school term the Principal will provide a report to the BOM setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported by means of this template and confirmation that all cases are being dealt with in accordance with procedure.

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

- **Victims**
 - Victims are reassured from the outset that they are **not** to blame. Speedy identification of those responsible is essential with a view towards a speedy resolution of the situation.
 - Strategies for restoring self-esteem are explored between teacher and parents/guardians.
 - Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling or in school social and emotional support
 - Staged approach-class support, school support (as per Continuum – Behavioural, Emotional and Social difficulties- NEPS).
- **Pupils engaging in bullying behaviour**
 - Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling. They may need to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. Empathy awareness needs to be developed.
 - Clinical referral and assessment may be necessary.
 - Staged approach- class support, school support(as per Continuum – Behavioural, Emotional and Social difficulties- NEPS)
- Incidents of bullying can extend beyond the school and the journey to and from school is one which can provide particular opportunities for bullying to occur. Parents, guardians, the school's Lollipop Lady will be made aware of the school's policy and procedures re Bullying and be encouraged to liaise with school staff should the need arise.
- In certain cases too it may be necessary to invite assistance from formal agencies such as Gardaí, (J.L.O) Health Board, and Local Youth Groups etc.
- The school will constantly remind parents of the dangers of "cyber- bullying" as can happen with the use of social networking sites and mobile phones. We also direct their attention to the school's internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

The school cannot be responsible for disagreements between pupils that happen outside the school grounds but will make reasonable efforts to cooperate with parents in assisting them to resolve the issues.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of pupils:

The BOM 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.

9. Prevention of Harassment

The BOM confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practical 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 Travelling community.

10. **Evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy**- The evaluation of the policy will happen on both an informal (through teacher observation) and formal basis (use of surveys and questionnaires).

Success Criteria –

- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils
- Well-being and happiness of the whole school community in the light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered and fewer problems in the yard.
- Increase in numbers of children reporting

11. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____
12. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parent's Association. A copy of the policy will be made available to the Department and patron if requested.
13. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the BOM 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 Parent's association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and to the Department.

Signed _____
(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Signed _____
(Principal)

Date _____

Date _____

