



# *Holy Rosary School*

## **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 Rosary School 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. 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.

3. 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*.

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

The ***class teacher*** has responsibility for investigating, recording, and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour to the Principal / Deputy Principal (Anti-Bullying Coordinators). Teachers in the Special Education Team (SET) may also support class teachers and pupils.

5. 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 (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

Teach our child-friendly version of the **I.S.P.C.C. Shield Statements** to all pupils:

- **WE SEE GOOD THINGS IN EVERYBODY**
- **WE KNOW THAT WE ARE DIFFERENT AND WE ARE ALL EQUAL**
- **WE HELP EACH OTHER**
- **IF SOMEONE IS MEAN, WE SAY STOP and MOVE AWAY**

- **IF SOMEONE TELLS US TO STOP BEING MEAN, WE STOP**
  - **WE CAN TALK ABOUT OUR FEELINGS AND WORRIES TO A TRUSTED ADULT**
  - **IF BULLIED WE TELL A TRUSTED ADULT**
  - **IF WE KNOW SOMEONE IS BEING BULLIED, WE TELL A TRUSTED ADULT**
- Shield Statements are:
    - Permanently displayed in all classrooms and in both playgrounds
    - Signed annually by parents of all pupils as a commitment by families to abide by the statements and support them fully (done via permissions on Aladdin).
    - Discussed termly at assembly and discussed monthly in class by Class Teachers on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of every month.
  - Talk about bullying with the whole class at least once each term, teaching them how to:
    - Deal with situations through S.P.H.E. and role-play
    - Make eye-contact to stand up for themselves
    - Say STOP
  - Since the failure to report bullying can lead to a continuation or an escalation of bullying, the school and parents encourage children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour. This can be with the class teacher, the teacher on yard duty at the time, the principal or with parents. This is a “telling school” (*cross reference Stay Safe Programme*). Children will therefore be constantly assured that their reports of bullying either for themselves or peers will be treated with sensitivity.
  - The display of posters and pictures promoting positive and anti-bullying behaviour in classrooms.
6. We aim to be an inclusive school and are aware of the neurodiversity of our pupils. The school recognises that children with additional needs may require assistance in understanding and applying certain rules. We recognise that our pupils may communicate in different ways, spoken voice, AAC devices, sign and through the use of picture symbols. We are also aware that some of our pupils may display behaviours that could be perceived as bullying behaviour including but not restricted to sensory differences, special interests or periods of dysregulation. Specialised support plans will be put in place in consultation with parents,

class teacher, support teacher, SENCO and/or principal. The relevant parties will work closely together to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive and emotional development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from NEPS, NCSE and CDNT will be sought to help guide and inform this process. In these instances we approach behaviour on a case by case basis. Behaviour targets are included in School Support Plus Plans and Behaviour Support Plans where necessary. Link to SEN Policy and Code of Behavior (p15)

7. 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*) :

Our school's procedures emphasise that the primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and restore as far as is practicable the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).

Our 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:

- A reported incident of bullying behaviour will be investigated by the Class Teacher/Principal/Deputy Principal asking "what, who, when, where, why" questions to establish whether bullying has occurred
- In any case where it has been determined by the Class Teacher/ Principal/Deputy Principal that bullying behaviour has occurred:
  - The parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage and requested to discuss the matter with the teacher/principal with a view to solving the problem. The actions being taken should be explained.
  - The relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
  - Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation.
  - If a group is involved, they will be met both individually and as a group. Each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that

everyone is clear about what everyone else has said. This account will be recorded.

- Pupils who are not directly involved but who may have useful information will be expected to assist the investigation.
  - Children should understand there are no innocent bystanders if they remain passive where bullying is concerned — All bystanders must report bullying.
  - Using questions in keeping with Restorative Practice the alleged “bully” will be asked to reflect on their behaviour and its consequences for themselves and for the person who is the victim. He/she will be asked to sign an undertaking that “this behaviour will not re-occur.”
  - The situation will continue to be monitored to ensure that the problem has been resolved, actions taken recorded, and records reviewed and analysed.
  - The code of behaviour will be invoked in circumstances where it is deemed prudent by the relevant teacher and school principal.
- In any case where it has been established that bullying behaviour took place, the Principal / Deputy Principal should complete the template for recording bullying behaviour. This incident sheet is retained on the child’s file until that file is destroyed.
  - In any case where it has been established that bullying behaviour did not occur, the Principal/Deputy Principal should complete the template for recording incidents where it has been established that bullying behaviour did not take place. This incident sheet is retained on the child’s file until that file is destroyed.
  - The principal will provide a report to the Board of Management, setting out the overall number of bullying cases recorded using the Department of Education’s Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour and confirm that all of these cases have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the school’s anti-bullying policy.
  - The Board of Management must undertake an annual review of the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy and its implementation by the school in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix 4 of the Department of Education & Skills Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. Written notification that the review has been completed must be made available to school personnel, published on the school website, and provided to the Parents’ Association.

- 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, in keeping with the school's Parental Concerns Policy, to the Board of Management.
  - If 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.
8. 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*) :
- Teaching the Shield Statements.
  - Self-esteem and self-confidence are fostered and developed throughout the school day eg. during "Circle Time" and Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) lessons.
  - Group work opportunities for teamwork.
  - Team building.
  - Posters promoting positive behaviour.
  - Restorative practice.
  - Curricular and extracurricular activities to develop positive self-worth.
  - Developing pupil's awareness of identity-based bullying i.e. the "Growing Up" lesson in SPHE.
  - Student Council.
  - Referral to Support Agencies.

## **CYBER BULLYING**

Cyber bullying includes (but is not limited to) communicating via electronic means with the objective of causing hurt, fear, embarrassment, humiliation, alarm and/or distress to one or more persons. It includes the use of mobile phones and other electronic devices with the objective of upsetting someone.

Cyber bullying is bullying carried out using information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, email, 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) anonymously.

Cyber bullying may take the form of general insults or impersonation, defamation or prejudice-based bullying.

**Unlike other forms of bullying a once-off posting can constitute bullying.**

While this policy addresses issues related to cyber bullying of students (i.e., situations in which one or more students are the victim[s] of bullying), the policy also applies to teaching and other school staff.

#### **Key Support Measures re Cyber Bullying:**

- Advice will be communicated to help students protect themselves from being involved in bullying (as perpetrator or as victim) and to advise them on reporting any incidents.
- Students will be informed about cyber bullying in the course of their education at the school.
- Gardaí are invited to visit the school to talk about cyber bullying.
- Parents will be invited at times to talks on bullying to include cyber bullying.
- Students and staff are expected to comply with the school's Mobile Phone and Other Technological Devices Policy.
- Parents will be encouraged to be informed of the technologies their children are using.
- Parents and students are advised that it is illegal for a child under 13 to register with and use many social media networks, including Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat, Viber etc. Reminders regarding this will be circulated to parents/guardians.
- Holy Rosary School endeavours to block access to inappropriate web sites, using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems and no pupil is allowed to work unsupervised on the Internet while on the school premises. (*cross reference Acceptable Use Policy*).
- Each year, Safer Internet Day will serve as an opportunity to promote awareness and prevent cyberbullying in our school.

#### **9. 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.

#### 10. 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.

11. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 27/01/2015.

12. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

13. 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. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: Noeleen Bolger.  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 25/10/2023.

Date of next review: October 2024

Signed: Brendan Roane  
(Principal)

Date: 25/10/2023



## 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> ?	Yes
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	Yes
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?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	Yes
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	Yes
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	Yes
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	Yes
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	Yes
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?	n/a
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	no
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	no
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	no
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?	n/a
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	Yes
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	Yes

Signed Noeleen Balger  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 25/10/23

Signed Brendan Roane  
Principal

Date 25/10/23

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

To: Archbishop Dermot Farrell

The Board of Management of Holy Rosary School 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 25/10/2023 [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 Noelleen Bolger  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 26/10/23.

Signed Brendan Poole  
Principal

Date 26/10/23