

SACRED HEART SCHOOL SRULEEN

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Introduction:

The Sacred Heart School Community thanks you for reading this important policy. We want to prevent and tackle bullying behaviour. We encourage everyone to become familiar with this policy.

1. Full Compliance

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB), the Board of Management of Sacred Heart National 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 by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in September 2013.

2. Key Principles of Best Practice

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:**

- o is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;

- o encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and

- o 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:**

o build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and

o 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);**
- **On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.**

Aims of the Policy

- To foster a school ethos of mutual and self-respect;
- To raise awareness of bullying as unacceptable behaviour;
- To outline, promote and raise awareness of preventative approaches that can be used in response to reported incidences of bullying;
- To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour;
- To outline procedures for noting and reporting instances of bullying behaviour; and
- To outline procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.

3. The Definition of Bullying :

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (DES 2013), 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, extortion, isolation, and persistent name calling,
- 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 **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 our 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 (DES 2013).

This policy applies to activities and events that take place:

- During school time (including break times);
- Going to and from school;
- School tours/trips; and
- Extra-curricular activities.

Sacred Heart School's Anti-Bullying Policy reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school which spills over into the school.

4. Who Is Responsible For Doing What:

The teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

The relevant class teacher will initiate the investigation.

Anti-Bullying Coordinators:

- Liam Kelly (School Principal)
- Una Chambers (Deputy Principal)

Those Responsible for Implementing this Policy:

- Liam Kelly (School Principal)

Responsibility for links with parents and dispersal of relevant information and supports.

- Una Chambers (Deputy Principal)

Responsibility for supporting teachers in relation to Social Personal Health Education (SPHE), Stay Safe and RSE programmes.

- All Teaching Staff, with the support of SNAs

All Teaching Staff, with the support of SNAs, will investigate and record incidents of bullying behaviour.

- SNA Liaison

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) will assist teachers in monitoring pupils and activities on yard.

- The Anti-Bullying Committee

This committee reviews the policy annually and monitors its implementation regularly.

As of November 2013, its members are Liam Kelly, Ann Manley, Emer Hegarty, Brian Stevenson, Fiona Flaherty and Joanne O'Donnell

Note: The “relevant” teacher is normally the class teacher.

5. Our School Action Plan

Sacred Heart School, January 2014

ANTI BULLYING POLICY – Review

Department of Education and Skills Initiatives

- (1) Task force on bullying report to Minister Jan 2013
- (2) New guidelines issued by DES in Sept 2013
- (3) DES advise that new policy must be in place by Easter 2014

Sacred Heart School Action Plan

1. Revise current standing policy created in 2013
2. Senior Management review new DES (2013) template
3. B.O.M. review DES (2013) template and set timescale for completion of process (April 2014)
4. Anti-Bullying committee review all documentation and formulate plan of action.
5. Post Holders Meeting to discuss record keeping of bullying incidents. (February 3rd 2014)
6. Staff meeting February 13th: Discuss record keeping of bullying incidents on the Aladdin System.
7. Anti-Bullying Committee complete draft Anti-Bullying Policy (February 28th 2014)
8. Post-Holders review of draft Anti-Bullying Policy (March 2014)
9. Whole Staff review of draft Anti-Bullying Policy at Staff Meeting (March 6th 2014)
10. Parents Association review draft policy (March 2014)
11. Copies of draft policy made available to the all parents.
12. The Anti-Bullying Committee will review the recommendations made by Staff/parents (3rd April)

13. BOM approves final draft at next available B.O.M. Meeting
14. Policy posted on school website after draft has been ratified by B.O.M.
15. Shield Statements posted around school – to be discussed at assembly at least once a term

6. Our Education and Prevention Strategies

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The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber bullying and identity based bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

1. Teaching the Shield Statements.
2. Circle time and incidental teaching as the need arises.
3. Our learning support/resource teachers will facilitate one-to-one self-esteem building activities. Work with small groups will also be facilitated.
4. The School Completion Service provide a structure and support for vulnerable children through Homework Club, Art Therapy, School lunches, Transition to Secondary School Programme.
5. Developing pupil's self-esteem and their awareness of bullying through the SPHE Programme, the RSE Programme and The Alive-O Programme
6. Particular account will also be taken of the important and unique role pupils with Special Educational Needs play in our school.
7. Choir and concerts.
8. Football/Hurling/Basketball/Camogie/Athletics etc. training and matches.
9. Green Schools Initiative.
10. Rainbows club.
11. Art Displays.
12. Science Fairs.
13. Debating/Art/ Tin Whistle/ Drama Clubs
14. Garda Visit
15. School Assemblies/ Principal's Class visits.
16. Poster displays

7. Our Procedures Re Bullying Behaviour :

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:

a. Since the failure to report bullying can lead to a continuation or a deterioration 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, Learning Support/Resource teacher, Special Needs Assistants, and the principal or with parents. This is a "telling school" as defined in the Stay Safe Programme. Children will therefore be constantly assured that their reports of bullying both for themselves or peers will be acted upon and treated with sensitivity.

b. An Incident of bullying behaviour will be noted and recorded by the class teacher or the teacher on duty/yard duty on the Aladdin system.

c. The Incident will be investigated – what, who, when, where, why, how?

d. An effort will be made to resolve any issues and to restore as far as practicable, the relationships.

e. The teacher(s) will exercise professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and as to how it can be resolved.

f. Parents and pupils are required to cooperate with any investigation.

g. Serious incidents, or a recurring incident of bullying behaviour which has in the opinion of a teacher not been adequately or appropriately addressed within 20 school days will be recorded on the DES template and shall be reported to the principal / deputy principal. The teacher will also use the DES recording template where he/she considers the bullying behaviour to constitute serious misconduct.

h. 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.

i. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way, and will be required 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.

j. The alleged “bully” will be asked to reflect on his/her behaviour and its consequences for himself/herself and for the person who is the victim of their behaviour.

k. Parents will be made aware of this behaviour and requested to come and discuss it with the teacher/principal with a view to solving the problem. If necessary the aggressor will be asked to sign an undertaking that “this behaviour will not reoccur.”

l. The situation will continue to be monitored to ensure that the problem has been resolved. Actions taken will be recorded on the Aladdin system. Records will be reviewed and analysed regularly.

m. The code of behaviour will be invoked in circumstances where it is deemed prudent by the relevant teacher and school principal.

n. If a case remains unresolved the matter will be referred to the school’s Board of Management. The Board will also be briefed in relation to the number, if any, of templates which have been completed.

o. Additionally, 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 Board of Management.

p. 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.

8. 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.

Cyber bullying includes the use of mobile phones and the internet with the objective of upsetting someone.

It 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 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 will continue to visit the school once a year to talk about cyber bullying (5th class).
- Teachers will dedicate a stand-alone lesson to deal with the issue of cyber bullying each year.
- Students and staff are expected to comply with the school's policy on the use of computers in the School. (Acceptable user policy)
- Parents will be provided with information and advice on cyber bullying.
- 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, and SnapChat.
- Sacred Heart School endeavours to block access to inappropriate web sites, using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems and no pupil is allowed to work on the Internet in the Computer Room, or any other location within the school which may from time to time be used for such school related work, without a member of staff present.

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. Date This Policy Was Adopted :

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on:

11. Availability of This Policy:

This policy has been made 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 of Education and Skills and the School Patron if requested.

12. Review of This Policy:

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 of Ratification by BOM: _____