

# Anti-Bullying Policy

## Statement of Intent

The school follows an active policy in the elimination of bullying and/or intimidation of any sort. It is not acceptable for a pupil to be intimidated in any way. The school encourages all pupils to have a positive attitude to life and study so that self-discipline is promoted.

As a Christian school we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING school. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff. Prefects and Monitors have a special duty to watch for any such happenings and must report such to a member of staff.

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 Wilson's Hospital 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 whole-school approach;
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impacts;
- 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. Similarly, if the one-off incident is severe enough to cause great distress this should also be termed 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

- Emotional – Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical – Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist – Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual – Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic – Because of, or focussing on, the issue of sexuality
- Verbal – Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber – All areas of internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse

– Mobile threats by text messaging and calls /misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities

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 persons for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

Year Heads

House Persons

Deputy Principal/Guidance Counsellor

Chaplain

Deputy Principal

Principal/Warden

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

### **Prevention**

The ethos of the school is one of caring and respect and aims to achieve the following:

- To enable the students to develop skills for self-fulfillment and living in communities
- To promote self-esteem and self-confidence
- To enable the students to develop a framework for responsible decision-making
- To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion
- To promote physical, mental and emotional health and well-being
- To promote respect for and acceptance of difference

Supervision is essential and is carried out to the highest of standards.

Pupils' areas will be pleasant and well maintained to both show and encourage respect for each member of the school community.

Regular surveys will be carried out and acted upon.

Pupils are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities

Cooperation is encouraged in all aspects of school life.

Specific modules of bullying are taught in SPHE classes and also mentioned where appropriate in other subject areas.

Recent research suggests the specific targeting of bystanders to become defenders and this is part of the prefects' role.

Anti-bullying posters are displayed throughout the school.

6. 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:

### **Procedures**

7. Incidents of bullying will be reported to relevant management/House Persons.
8. All reports of bullying will be investigated in a calm, problem-solving approach
9. All staff (teaching and non-teaching) are encouraged to reports incidences of bullying to the relevant teacher
10. In cases of bullying, the incidents will be recorded by the above and those involved will write down their accounts.
11. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
12. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
13. Support will be given to the victims.
14. Where possible Support Group approaches will be used.
15. If necessary parents will be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
16. If necessary and appropriate, the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí will be consulted.
17. If after 20 days it is considered that the matter has not been appropriately addressed it must be recorded in the recording template.
18. If parents are not satisfied that the school has dealt with the case the parents must be referred to the school's complaints procedures.
19. Bystanders will be encouraged to discuss incidents of bullying with teachers.

### **Outcomes**

20. The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place. Counselling may be appropriate.
21. If possible, the pupils will be reconciled.
22. After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
23. Where appropriate Support Group approaches will be used.
24. Those victimised will be given support and their self-worth enhanced
25. In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered.

26. If the school has serious concerns about managing the behaviour of a student the advice of NEPS will be sought.

27. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying and those observing is as follows:

- Solution Focused Brief Therapy will be used to help victims gain/regain confidence in conjunction with the school's Guidance Programme including S.P.H.E.
- Counselling may be appropriate for those bullying.
- Restorative Justice Methods will be used if deemed appropriate
- The Support Group Method will be employed and this will include working with bystanders.

28. 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.

29. 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 or member of the Traveller community.

30. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2014

31. 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 and the Patron if requested.

32. 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: *Mr Nigel Foley-Fisher*

Chairperson School Management Board

*Mrs Rosemary Maxwell-Eager*

Warden & Principal

Date: 12/05/2014