

Holy Rosary College Mountbellew

Anti- Bullying Policy

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 College 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.

Bullying in Holy Rosary College will not be tolerated and is treated as a serious breach of the school rules to which all parents and students have signed up. Bullying is totally contrary to the ethos of the school and the school's Mission Statement. There is zero tolerance of bullying in Holy Rosary College.

The Policy applies to all members of the school community of Holy Rosary College. It applies to students in class, between classes, while on the school premises, while travelling to or from school, on school based activities, school tours, to anything done in the name of Holy Rosary College and while in school uniform.

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students. The Board aims to create a positive school atmosphere which is welcoming of difference and diversity and which is based on inclusivity and respect for all.

We encourage students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment.

Our Mission Statement promotes respectful relationships across the entire school community. We promote effective leadership at all levels of the school community.

There is a school-wide approach to and support for our anti-bullying policy and a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact on the subject, the perpetrator and on bystanders.

Education and prevention strategies include awareness raising measures, building empathy, respect and resilience in students, explicitly addressing the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying i.e. homophobic and transphobic bullying.

Staff are reminded at the beginning of each school year of the school's anti bullying policy and of the need for consistent recording and reporting of any incidents of bullying or suspected bullying of which they are aware.

Temporary and substitute staff are given a copy of the Teacher's Handbook containing the school's Code of Behaviour and the Anti- bullying Policy.

The Anti-bullying Policy will be evaluated on an annual basis and presented to students, staff and parents at the beginning of the school year.

Definition of Bullying

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.

Types of Bullying

Physical aggression: This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people or severe physical assault. While students often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

Intimidation: Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation. It may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression, dislike and/or disapproval.

Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying: This occurs where a certain person or group is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by an individual or by a group. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the student in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the student or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore" (implied or stated), a group ganging up against one person, non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".

Cyber-bullying: This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, 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 of the day or night. Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc. Sexting –the sending of messages or photos of a sexual nature may be regarded as pornography, the sending and/or storing of which is a criminal offence.

Name calling: Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name calling of this type refers to physical appearance. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to have special

education needs. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.

Damage to property: Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or other property. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

Extortion: Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted student not delivering on the demand). A student may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

Impact of bullying behaviour on

The subject

- Students who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity, humiliation and extreme anxiety.
- Self-confidence may be damaged with a consequent lowering of self-esteem.
- Suffering is indicated through changes in mood and behaviour.
- Extreme cases of bullying may result in suicide.

Bystanders

- Students who witness bullying may also be affected and may suffer in similar ways to those who are bullied.
- Students who witness identity-based bullying and share that identity can experience anxiety and feel under threat themselves.
- Students can also feel guilt or distress at not being able to help the person being bullied.

The perpetrator

- Students who become involved in such behaviour can be at higher risk of depression.
- They have an increased risk of developing an anti-social personality, anxiety disorders and a likelihood of substance abuse.
- They may exhibit law-breaking behaviour in adulthood and may have a decreased educational and occupational attainment.

Indicators of bullying behaviour

The following signs and symptoms may suggest that a student is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school e.g. requesting parents to drive or collect him/her, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school;
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, truancy
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school
- Pattern of physical illnesses e.g. headaches, stomach aches
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or after school holidays
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g. stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either students or teachers
- Possessions missing or damaged

- Increased requests for money or stealing money
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her
- There may be other signs depending on the individual and his/her circumstances. The above signs do not necessarily mean that a student is being bullied but if repeated or occurring in combination, these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

Characteristics associated with bullying

A significant proportion of bullying is not merely behavioural but is rooted in a lack of respect for diversity and in social inequalities. “Prejudice-based” or “identity-based” bullying can be a significant factor in bullying behaviour. **Bullying is learned behaviour, learned at home, in clubs from associates.**

Students who engage in bullying behaviour tend to display aggressive attitudes combined with a low level of self-discipline and self-esteem. They may lack any sense of remorse, convincing themselves that the other person deserves the treatment they are receiving.

Students who engage in bullying behaviour can be attention seeking, setting out to impress bystanders and responding to the reaction their behaviour provokes. They can lack the ability to empathise. They can appear unaware or indifferent to the other person’s feelings. It is of note that students who exhibit bullying behaviour often suffer from a lack of confidence and have low self-esteem. They engage in bullying to boost their own poor self-worth.

Students who engage in bullying behaviour do not always intend to bully or may not recognise the potential negative impact of their words and actions on others.

It is not uncommon to find that students who engage in bullying behaviour may also have been bullied themselves.

Any student through no fault of their own may be a target of bullying. It is common in the course of normal interaction for students to tease or taunt each other. However, at a certain point, teasing and taunting may become forms of bullying behaviour. As students can be particularly quick to notice differences in others, those who are perceived as different in some way can be more prone to encounter such behaviour. However, the students who are most at risk of being bullied are those who react in a vulnerable and distressed manner.

Students who are bullied often experience difficulties in speaking up about bullying. The difficulties include:

- Fear of reprisals
- Concerns about being perceived as a “tell-tale”
- Concerns about “getting into trouble” or not being believed
- Not having evidence to back up a bullying allegation
- Not knowing how the matter will be dealt with by the school

Vulnerable Students

While bullying can happen to any student, some may be more at risk of experiencing bullying e.g. students with disabilities or special educational needs, those from ethnic minority, students from the Traveller community, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) students and those perceived to be LGBT and students of minority religious faiths.

Education and Prevention Strategies

The Board of Management of Holy Rosary College is committed to the prevention of bullying in all its forms. This is done through awareness raising, prevention strategies, recording, investigation of incidents and supporting the subject, the bystanders and the perpetrator.

- The Board of Management of Holy Rosary College raises awareness of the school's anti-bullying policy among staff, parents and students. This is done at staff meetings, parent association meetings, at class and year assemblies and at class teacher time.
- Initiatives and programmes (Friendship Week, Humorfit, Class Teacher time, Guest Speakers, LGBT posters on notice boards) focus on developing student, staff and parent awareness and understanding of all forms of bullying, its causes and effects. Issues of identity-based bullying and in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying are dealt with regularly throughout the school year.
- National cyber bullying week takes place in February. The school will use that time to educate students on appropriate online behaviour and how to stay safe online. They are encouraged to report any concerns they may have about cyber bullying. While cyberbullying takes place usually outside normal school time, the Board of Management reserves the right to deal with it under the school's anti-bullying policy if the well-being of students in the school is affected or if it adversely affects the day to day operation of the school. Students of Holy Rosary College are representatives and ambassadors of the school and off site and/or after school behaviour which reflects badly on the school will not be tolerated and may be subject to sanction.
- All classes have class teacher time where issues of student concern including bullying are raised. Students are surveyed at least once a year on bullying and bully-slips are used to allow students report any bullying incidents.
- The bully-box into which students can place their concerns is checked weekly and any reports are dealt with.
- Students have the opportunity to discuss any concerns re bullying with members of the students council, with their prefects or Cairde and also with their class teacher.
- SEN students are included in all aspects of school life. This inclusion together with supervision by SNA staff ensures that these students are very safe in school and are enabled to participate in the life of the school.
- The SPHE programme in all junior classes and in Transition Year makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.
- The Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme provides opportunities to explore and discuss areas such as human sexuality and relationships, which has particular relevance to identity-based bullying.
- All teachers in all subjects foster an attitude of respect for all, promote the value of diversity, address prejudice and stereotyping and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

- The school provides a wide range of extra- curricular activities, sporting and non-sporting that are open to all students. These activities develop self- esteem, assertiveness and self- confidence in students.

Procedures for investigating bullying behaviour

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.

- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be reported to the principal. In that way students will gain confidence in ‘telling’. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all students that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be “telling tales” but are behaving responsibly.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers and cleaners are expected to report to the principal any incidents of bullying witnessed by them or of which they become aware.
- Parents and students 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.
- A problem-solving approach will be taken when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by students, staff or parents. It may be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
- All interviews will be conducted with due regard to the rights of all students concerned. Students who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information.
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group as far as is practicable.
- In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. Parents will be given an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can support the actions being taken by the school and the way in which they can support their sons/daughters.
- Where it has been determined that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school’s anti-bullying policy. Efforts will be made to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the student being bullied.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will be arranged with a view to bringing them together at a later date if the student who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.

- Sanctions for bullying may include the writing of letters of apology to subject and parent(s), issuing of a yellow card, lunchtime or evening detention, suspension, exclusion, referral to NEPS, HSE and /or Gardaí.
- In cases where it is considered that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the relevant recording template
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the following will be taken into account:
 - ✓ Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
 - ✓ Whether issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable
 - ✓ Whether the relationship between the parties has been restored as far as is practicable
- 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.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and recorded by the principal/deputy principal.

If a teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after reporting it to the principal, the teacher must record his/her concerns on the relevant recording form.

Referral of serious cases to Outside Agencies

Serious instances of bullying behaviour should, in accordance with the Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, be referred to Tusla- the Child and Family Agency and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the Tusla- the Child and Family Agency.

In cases where there is a serious concern in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) will be sought.

Support for students affected by bullying

The student who has been bullied will be offered consistent support by the school counsellor, chaplain or other staff members whom the student trusts. In some cases the student may be encouraged to

- ✓ talk to as many people as possible -friends, parents, teachers
- ✓ make friends and stay with friends
- ✓ become assertive and to develop a positive assertive response to incidents of bullying.

The Bully

Interventions will be offered to the student involved in bullying behaviour so that the necessary attitudinal and behavioural changes can be made.

Counselling will be offered to get the bully to understand

- ✓ why he/she is involved in bullying behaviour ,
- ✓ that his/her behaviour is unacceptable and is causing distress,
- ✓ that his /her behaviour is in violation of the school's Code of Behaviour, the Mission Statement and the Anti-bullying policy
- ✓ that bullying is not tolerated in the school

Supervision and Monitoring of Students

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.

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 students or staff or the harassment of students 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.

Reporting to the Board of Management

At every meeting of the Board of Management the Principal provides a report to the Board of Management setting out:

- ✓ the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template) since the previous report to the Board
- ✓ confirmation that all such cases have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-bullying Policy and the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools.

The minutes of the Board of Management meeting must record the above but must not include any identifying details of the students involved.

Annual Review by the Board of Management

The Board of Management at Holy Rosary College will undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation by the school.

A standardised checklist will be used in undertaking this review. 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.

The school will put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement identified by the review.

This policy will be 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 to CEIST if requested.

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 CEIST and to the Department.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 14/02/2019

Signed: Tom Crehan (Principal) Date: 14/02/201

Signed: Lil Bruen (Chairperson of Board of Management) Date: 14/02/2019

Date of next review: 14/02/2020

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> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
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?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
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?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
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?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

Notification regarding the Board of Management's Annual Review of the Anti-bullying Policy

To: _____

The Board of Management of _____ 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 _____ [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 _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

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6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Details of actions taken

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Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

* **Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.