

**ST DAVID'S HOLY FAITH SECONDARY SCHOOL,  
GREYSTONES, CO. WICKLOW**

**ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

This Anti-Bullying Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on

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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 St David's Holy Faith Secondary 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.

This policy is developed with reference to the requirements set out in the following acts:

- The Equal Status Acts 2000-2011
- The Employment equality Acts 1998 – 2008
- The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005
- The Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- The Education Act 1998

and cognisant of the guidelines in the following DES documents:

- Guidelines for Countering Bullying Behaviour 1993
- Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for schools. NEWB 2008
- Action Plan on Bullying. DES 2013 and 'Anti-bullying procedures for primary and post-primary schools' September 2013.
- A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Teachers NEPS (2010b)
- Wellbeing in Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention. Department of Education and Skills, Department of Health (2013)

**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 (Appendix 2).

Effective leadership is

- 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.

**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.

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

- In the classroom: If a teacher suspects an incident/event has occurred, he/she will speak to the alleged bully; the student who appears to be the victim and if possible, any independent witness to the incident(s) of bullying
- This alleged incident(s) is immediately reported to the relevant Year Head.
- The Deputy Principal or the Principal will only become involved after the initial investigation has been completed and the allegation is deemed to have substance
- Any incident of bullying must be recorded, in accordance with the Department of Education and Skills Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, (2013).

- The Year Head will complete the report using the appropriate template for recording bullying behaviour in Appendix 1 for initial reporting and Appendix 3 when investigations have been completed into the incident(s).
- The Year Head (Deputy Principal, in the absence of the Year Head) should make contact with the parents/guardians where appropriate and deemed necessary.

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:

### **Cyber-bullying:**

'Cyber Bullying refers to bullying which is carried out using the internet, mobile phones or other technological devices'. (Pg.3 A Guide to Cyber Bullying -From the Office for Internet Safety).

A section on cyber-bullying has been included in this policy since there are key differences from traditional bullying that require a difference in approach:

- Cyber-bullying can happen at any time and in any place and for many young people, home is no longer a safe haven from bullying.
- Online communication between young people is often hidden from adults. Young people are increasingly communicating in ways that are unknown to adults and free from supervision.
- The anonymity that the Internet affords has particular consequences. In most cases, cyber bullies know their targets, but their targets don't always know the identity of their cyber bullies. This can lead to children and young people being suspicious of, and alienated from, all their peers.
- Young people posting messages on the Internet do not feel as responsible for their actions as they might otherwise. They are not immediately confronted with the consequences of their actions and they don't fear being punished for them. The nature of the medium means digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and is almost impossible to delete permanently. Young people may not be aware that the nature of cyber bullying provides for a permanent record of the bullying offence which could impact on them in the future.
- Young people are often fearful of reporting incidents, as they fear that adults will take away their mobile phone, computer and/or Internet access.

### **School Response**

Incidents of which the school has been made aware will be treated in accordance with the principles and procedures of this Anti-Bullying policy, in conjunction with the school's Code of Behaviour policy, the Child Protection Policy, the Acceptable Usage Policy, the Health and Safety Statement and the Policies on Dignity in the Workplace and other relevant policies.

As part of the whole school approach, the following preventative measures are in place in St David's Holy Faith Secondary School, Greystones:

- All mobile phones must be placed in a school-bag or in pocket during class time. Specific protocols are outlined in the school's Code of Behaviour Policy. As per said policy, and in conjunction with this Anti-Bullying Policy and our AUP, students are not permitted to take photos of any staff personnel or of one another.
- There is a cross curricular education programme covering the following issues:
  - the principles of netiquette (respectful use of internet)
  - the legal consequences of prosecution
  - The damaging effects of cyber-bullying for the victim and for the aggressor's reputation
- All social network sites are blocked on school computers
- The school will investigate all incidents reported to it and as per the code of behaviour, if deemed appropriate and necessary, sanctions imposed.

### **Reporting procedures and investigation**

- Any student who believes s/he has or is being subjected to Cyber-Bullying as well as any person who has reason to believe a fellow student is being subjected to Cyber-Bullying, they should immediately report the matter to the Year Head
- The relevant Year Head shall investigate any reports of such conduct which they receive in line with the code of behaviour and procedures outlined in this Anti-Bullying Policy. Any member of the school community who is found to have engaged in cyber-bullying will be subject to appropriate discipline and sanctions.
- In relation to incidents which occur within the school and within school hours, the school's behaviour code will apply as usual. In relation to incidents of cyber-bullying which occur outside the school and outside school hours, the school will engage with such incidents in so far as they impact on life within the school and in accordance with the provisions of the school's code of behaviour. Where the school considers that any such incidents have a wider and more serious consequence, they will be reported to the Gardai and the school will advise parents of this avenue of approach. The school exercises its right to investigate said allegations, if deemed relevant to staff and students, within the school community.

### **Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying**

"Homophobic and transphobic bullying is a specific type of bullying which is targeted at those who are, or who are believed to be, LGBTQI (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Intersex)." (Action Plan on Bullying: Report of the Anti-Bullying Working Group to the Minister for Education and Skills; January 2013)

In line with the general approach of this policy specific prevention strategies to target Homophobic Bullying are as follows:

- Be sensitive to the needs of students who identify as LGBTQI
- Make links with youth groups – clubs such as the school’s Diversity Club
- Support LGBTQI staff
- Display Stand Up and other LGBTQI posters especially with Diversity Week (November each year)
- Tackle anti-LGBTQI language, incidents and graffiti on school grounds.
- Teach new SPHE resource
- Include LGBTQI topics across the curriculum
- Tackle anti-LGBTQI incidents in the classroom
- Specific mention of anti-LGBTQI bullying in the bullying policy
- Publicise this section of the bullying policy to parents and students.
- Celebrate “Stand Up! LGBTQI Awareness Week against Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying” each year.

**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:**

**How to report an incident of bullying?**

- Tell your parents/guardians at home
- Talk to a teacher and/or year head after class/on the corridor
- Talk to member of liaison group (school prefects)
- Ask a parent/guardian/friend to inform the relevant person on your behalf
- Speak with your Year Head.

**What happens then?**

- The alleged victim of bullying will write out a statement, sign and date it, detailing the allegations of bullying
- Potential witnesses will be interviewed and statements taken
- Once process completed, the alleged bully(ies) will be interviewed, with their parent(s)/guardian(s) present, under the principles of natural justice and due process with the Year Head and Deputy Principal.
- The Principal will provide a termly report to the Board of Management setting out the following:
  - The overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the reporting template: FORM AB3) since the previous meeting
  - Confirmation that all cases reported to the Board of Management (via the FORM AB3), have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the DES Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.
  - The minutes of the Board of Management meeting will record the Principal’s report but in doing so will not include any identifying details of students involved

**Sanctions that are imposed**

The School, in accordance with the code of behaviour views serious incidents of bullying as a major breach of the code of behaviour and therefore, sanctions are applied, to include one or more of the following:

- Expulsion/ suspension/ detention/ verbal warning/ referral to a child psychologist/referral to the local Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer and Túsla in accordance with Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools (2013)
- Records of serious incidents of bullying will have a major impact on the reference that the school will provide to students upon departure
- Furthermore, all records of incidents of bullying, are stored in St. David's Holy Faith Secondary School for a period not to exceed five years after all involved in any incidents of bullying have left the school.

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

- If a parent/guardian/friend notices any signs/symptoms that could indicate a possibility of bullying, it is important that investigating same does not put additional pressure on the student(s).
- It is recommended that we are contacted in the school by telephone and/or email at first. A meeting may follow, when necessary.
- Students should discuss any incident of bullying with their parents/guardians/ siblings/family where possible in the first instance.
- Contact, should be made with the Year Head in the school (Appendix 1).
- Students, however, might prefer to talk to another teacher/tutor about bullying.
- It is important to inform all students of our school that talking with a teacher or another trusted adult within the school is responsible behaviour.
- It is important that all students in our school realise that they each have a responsibility towards their fellow students to report any bullying incident(s). Here, in St. David's Holy Faith Secondary School, a culture of silence around this issue is never acceptable and we actively discourage this culture through the provision of workshops, tutorial classes and curricular provisions such as CSPE, SPHE, RSE, RE and Wellbeing programmes.

St. David's Holy Faith Secondary School, Greystones, is proud of our tradition of care, support and respect for all people – students, staff, parents, guardians and the wider community. Our school is part of the Le Chéile Catholic Schools' Trust and through this we endeavour to ensure the dignity of the person is integral to all aspects of our school life. Through our supports and interventions, school Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads, Tutors, Ancillary Staff, we, as a school community put the wellbeing and safety of our students to the fore. Prior to Covid-19, our Year Heads reinforced and copper-fastened this culture of care through school assemblies. Students are continuously supported and encouraged to respect, work together, and engage with one another in all aspects of school life. Bullying,

harassment, name-calling and all other forms of inappropriate conduct to one another is not tolerated. Our Student Council, Student Liaison Team, Fifth Year Student Prefects, Amber Flag Team, and Class Captains, are all encouraged and supported in their role to foster student-led advocacy against bullying.

### **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.

### **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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_ [date].

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. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron 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 the patron and the Department.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 1 Initial Template for Report of Bullying Incident**

Give a short description of the bullying incident

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Where did it happen? (Precise location, if possible)

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Who was involved?

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Were there any witnesses who saw or heard what happened?

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Have you had any previous bullying incidents? Please give details

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**Date of the incident:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time of the incident:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed by Student:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed by Year Head:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school. Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school.
- Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
- Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

## 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)

**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.

