Wilson's Hospital School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Statement of Intent

1. The school follows an active policy in the elimination of bullying and/or intimidation of any sort. It is not acceptable for a student to be intimidated in any way. The school encourages all students 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 students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all students 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 have a special duty to watch for any such happenings and must report such to a member of staff.

    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 students 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 students 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 students; and explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying
    - Effective supervision and monitoring of students
    - 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
   - 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 (This list is not exhaustive)

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

The relevant persons for investigating and dealing with bullying are the Care Team members:

Ms McShane   Principal & Warden
Mr Galligan   Deputy Principal
Ms Malone   Guidance Counsellor
Ms. Hy   SEN Co-ordinator
Mr. Dunne   SEN department
Mr. Hawkins   Chaplain
Ms Rowden   SNA
Susan Reynolds   Senior Matron
Respective Year Heads
Respective Boarding House Persons

The Care Team members involved in dealing with bullying investigations will have appropriate training and be familiar with the contents of this policy.

5. Education & Prevention Strategies

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:

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-fulfilment 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

Prevention Education

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

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

Cooperation is encouraged in all aspects of school life.

FUSE; an anti-bullying and online safety programme will be delivered to all second years.

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.

From time to time supportive practices eg Sociograms (Appendix A) will be employed to establish social atmosphere of a class or year group.

6. Procedures for investigation

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:

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

Outcomes of investigation

- The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place. Counselling may be appropriate
- If possible, the students will be reconciled
- After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place
- Where appropriate Support Group approaches will be used
- Those victimised will be given support and their self-worth enhanced
- In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered
- If the school has serious concerns about managing the behaviour of a student the advice of NEPS will be sought

7. Programme of Support

- The school's programme of support for working with students 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.

8. 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.

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 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 or member of the Traveller community.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 1st March 2022**.**

11. This policy has been made available to all school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Council and Students Council. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Patron if requested.

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

Approved by the Board of Management

Signed: *Mr John Rogers*   Signed: *Mrs Niamh McShane*
Chairperson of Board of Management   Principal

Dated: 1st March 2022

APPENDIX A (Sample Bullying Sociogram (Source: Cool School Programme HSE 2010)

Name of student:

Are you happy with the atmosphere in your class?

Who are your friends?

Are you being bullied in any way? (If the answer is yes, gather details and reassure the student that the problem will be addressed.)

Is there anyone in the class being picked on or having a hard time?

Is anyone being left out, or ignored?

Is there anyone spreading rumours or gossip, or using notes, phone calls, text messages or social media to make others feel bad about themselves?

Is anyone being unfair to others?

Is there a group of pupils making life difficult for others?

Are pupils from other classes giving anyone in this class a hard time?

Can you give examples?

Who do you think is causing the problem?

What can you do to help students who are having a hard time?

Have you been bullying anyone?

Conclude by reminding all pupils about the school's anti-bullying policy. Thank them for their co-operation, and mention that you will be acting on the information you have received.

Summary for Teacher:

Who is bullying?	What Is the behaviour? Who reported it?	Who is it directed towards?

APPENDIX B

Procedures for investigation of bullying behaviour:

Details of the initial complaint will be recorded.

The complaint may be verbal or written. If verbal, a written note of what is complained of will be taken by staff member and agreed with the student.

Staff will keep a record of all meetings both informal and formal that occur in a bullying investigation, including all actions agreed.

Informal Resolution

The first step in the informal approach is to ascertain the facts of the allegation, and discuss them with the person who the allegation was made against.

Resolving the problem informally involves the person who feels that he/she is being bullied explaining clearly to the person engaging in the unwanted conduct that the behaviour in question is not acceptable, that it offends him/her or makes him/her uncomfortable and that it interferes with his/her study.

In circumstances where this is too difficult for a student to do on his/her own, he/she may ask another student of his/her choice to accompany him/her.

Examples of behaviours should be sought, if no examples are provided, it must be deemed that there is no complaint to be answered by the person complained about.

If the matter is resolved informally no disciplinary action will be taken.

Restorative Mediation

Mediation is an alternative method of resolving alleged bullying issues, seeking to arrive at a solution through an agreement between the parties, rather than through a formal investigation and decision.

Mediation provides a confidential opportunity for the person who feels that he/she has been bullied and the person accused of carrying out this inappropriate behaviour to discuss the matter and to reach an agreement on their continuing relationship at the school.

Mediation is conducted in private, and is directly between the parties concerned, with the support of a mediator, who will act as an independent facilitator. Either student may withdraw from the process at any time by notifying the mediator that they wish to do so.

Enough time needs to be allowed for the mediation or on-going monitoring process to be successful and behaviour change to be realistically achieved over the longer term. It may be necessary to consider if other arrangements are required or feasible during this short-term phase. A proposal should be made, considered, and, if possible, an action and time frame should be agreed.

Confidentiality is crucial for this stage to be effective and breaches of confidentiality may result in applying the Disciplinary Procedure.

To obtain closure after a resolution is found through informal procedures both parties should be given support or follow up reviews. Counselling may necessary.

If the matter is resolved by mediation no disciplinary action will be taken.

Formal Investigation

The objective of a formal investigation is to determine whether or not, on the balance of probabilities, the behaviours complained of occurred. Evidence is necessary. The complaint must be in writing.

Once a decision to resolve the matter by formal investigation has been taken all efforts will be made to deal with it promptly and sympathetically.

The process involved is that an investigator(s) (members of the care team) will meet with the student making the complaint and the student against whom a complaint has been made and also with any witnesses or other relevant persons.

This will be done on an individual basis with a view to establishing the facts surrounding the allegation(s) and will be kept confidential.

Another member of the care team may provide support during this process.

The investigation will be thorough, impartial and objective.

Any effort by the person against whom the complaint has been made to intimidate or communicate with the person making the complaint, may be subject to disciplinary action.

Every effort will be made to ensure the protection of everybody involved in the investigation. Failure to do so may be treated as a disciplinary matter.

At the completion of the investigation a written report will be prepared and forwarded to the Principal, which will include the nature and details of the complaint, the response of the person against whom the complaint has been made, the findings of the investigation and conclusion. (See Appendix B).

Both parties will be advised of the outcomes before any action is taken.

Disciplinary action may be taken in the interest of fairness to all involved.

Supports e.g. counselling will be put in place around both parties as deemed necessary.

Investigation Report of Bullying Complaint at Wilson's Hospital School

1. Name of student being bullied and class group

   Name _____Class_____

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

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

3. Date of first report:

4. Location of incident(s):

5   Details of incident(s), with dates where possible. Impact of such incident(s).

6   Type of Bullying Behaviour e.g. Physical Aggression; Cyber-bullying; Damage to Property; Intimidation Isolation/Exclusion; Malicious Gossip; Name Calling

7   Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category: Homophobic Disability/SEN related Racist Membership of Traveller community/Other (specify)

Homophobic	Disability/SEN	Racist	Genderist	Other

8   Actions Taken:

Signed _____(Staff Member)   Date_____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

References and Resources:

Circular 0045/2013 Department of Education and Skills https://www.education.ie/en/circulars-and-forms/active-circulars/cl0045_2013.pdf

Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2013
https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-for-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools.pdf

Hopkins. B. (2002). Transforming Conflict: Restorative Justice in Schools

Cool School Programme 2010 https://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Cool%20School%20Program.pdf