



SHS -Anti Bullying Policy 2021-2022

Our Mission Statement

To provide a holistic education in the Mercy tradition

Our Vision

“In keeping with the Mercy tradition, we seek to achieve the holistic development and the achievement of the full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalised. We strive to ensure that our students leave our school with a healthy self-image, enhanced by the life skills and abilities necessary to make a positive contribution to society.”

A Voluntary Secondary School

Ours is what is known as a Voluntary Secondary School for girls. It dates from 1836 when the Mercy Sisters started a school soon after they arrived in Tullamore and founded their second house here.

The school is now a member of CEIST (Catholic Education, An Irish Schools Trust) and is managed by a Board of Management.

A Catholic School

A Catholic school helps students to develop their understanding of their faith. Ours is a Catholic school, but it is not a school for Catholics only. Due to the universal, non-discriminatory nature of Catholicism and the value it places on ecumenism and interfaith dialogue, seeing God at work in all people, Catholic schools are open to the admission of pupils of all faiths and none.

Catholic education values tolerance and inclusiveness and sees the presence of children from other denominations as an enrichment of the educational experience and an opportunity for deeper understanding among people holding diverse convictions.

Policy Index

1. Background
2. Key Principles and Practice in Preventing Bullying
3. Definition of Bullying
4. Relevant Teachers for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying
5. General School Approach to Bullying
6. Procedure for investigation, follow up and record keeping and sanctions
7. Schools programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying
8. Supervising and Monitoring of Pupils
9. Prevention of Harassment
10. Adoption / of Policy
11. Publishing of Policy
12. Review of Policy

Appendices

1. Checklist for protocol for procedures and review of policy
2. Record Sheet
3. Appealing a decision following a bullying incident
4. Types/examples of bullying and signs and symptoms of bullying
5. School wide strategies to prevent bullying
6. Advice to parents
7. Guideline to staff when investigating a bullying incident
8. Student support, restorative justice practice and goals sheet
9. Infographic on Anti-Bullying

SHS Anti Bullying Policy 2021-2022

1. Background

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 **Sacred Heart School Tullamore**, 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. Key Principles and Practice in Preventing Bullying

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:

- Providing a positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and is based on inclusivity and builds empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
- Provides effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
- Encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
- Promotes respectful relationships across the school community
- Provides effective leadership

The SHS school wide approach to bullying is underpinned by the following:

1. A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
2. Implementation of education and prevention strategies e.g. awareness raising
3. Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
4. Support for staff and students; dealing with bullying
5. Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour, including use of established intervention strategies and **using a no blame approach at the outset**
6. On-going evaluation and review of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy annually
7. Inclusion of student voice and effective strategies ; guest speakers, awareness initiatives etc
8. The objective in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues as far as practicable in the relationships between the parties involved

3. Definition of Bullying

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 (snap chat etc), 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.

When dealing with incidents of bullying it is important to focus on both the impact and the intention. In addition, negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the School Code of Behaviour.

The school reserves the right to apply the policy in respect of bullying that occurs outside of school but creates a hostile environment for student/or infringed upon rights of student in school. (See Appendix 4 for types and examples of bullying.

4. Relevant Staff for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

All teachers in this school have a responsibility to deal with bullying issues as they arise. Therefore, the relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are in the following escalation sequence:

- Class teacher/SNA and /or
- Tutor and/or
- Form Teacher and/or
- Year Head
- Student Support Team
- Deputy Principal
- Principal

5.General School Prevention Approach to Prevent Bullying (Appendix 5 for further examples)

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:

- Providing information on the topic in SPHE class and any class which provides such an opportunity
- Encouraging students, if they feel they cannot get involved, to tell an adult immediately.
- Catching students being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Having a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teaching pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Teaching staff and non-teaching staff actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Supporting the establishment and work of the Student Council by encouraging students to review the policy, and to share and communicate the school wide approach to all students(See infographic in Appendix 9).

Responsibilities of Parents in Promoting Positive Behaviour to Prevent Bullying

Parents as the primary educators of their children, play a vital role in supporting their child in all aspects of school life. If you know or suspect that your child is a bully or being bullied you must act immediately and inform the school. The information on the important role of parents is in Appendix 6

Role of the Student Council in our Anti Bullying Programme

The Student Council plays a vital role in assisting to formulate and review our anti bullying policy. The Student Council suggestions have been included in this policy. Our Student Council works to promote positive behaviour amongst students and to organise anti bullying campaigns and poster information highlighting unacceptable behaviour. An infographic prepared by the Student Council is available in the Appendix 9.

6.Procedure for investigation, follow up, record keeping and sanctions for bullying

A. Investigation:

- A. A report may come from class teacher or Form Teacher and it is referred to the Year Head.**
- B. The Year Head brings the report/issue directly to SMT or Year Head weekly meeting depending on urgency of matter.**
- C. Two staff members are asked to investigate the matter and compile report.(See template used to record the investigation in Appendix 2)**
- D. The report is circulated to Student Support Team (SST)**
- E. Meeting convened to discuss report and strategies advised.(see Appendix 4 for types of bullying)**

B. Follow Up:

- F. Two members of SST appointed to meet with parties to implement strategies, resolutions.**
- G. Staff mentor is provided to each of the students involved.**
- H. Student's name is added to Green/Red List on SST and reviewed weekly.**
- I. SST Co-ordinator reviews issue for SST after 20 days.**

C. Record Keeping:

- J. A record is filed in folder with secretary in school office.**
- K. Recorded on Sims- under behaviour.**
- L. Parents of all parties are communicated with by SMT.**
- M. School Counsellor may be appointed to a student to work with them on emotion regulation, anxiety, etc. Updates given at weekly SST meeting.**
- N. Student/s may be referred to external agency, GP/Jigsaw etc.**
- O. Depending on the context, advice may be sought from Tusla and is then included on CPOR.**
- P. A report is made to Board of Management under Principal's Business.**

D. Sanctions for Bullying Behaviour

When the behaviour persists or is more serious, the parents/guardians of the bully will be informed and invited to come to the school to assist with a resolution of the matter.

Appropriate sanctions will be imposed which may include any of the following:

- A contract for good behaviour**
- Withdrawal of privileges**

- **Student placed on report**
- **Student placed on community service**
- **The Board of Management will take appropriate action up to and including suspension and expulsion. All incidents of bullying are viewed as serious.**
- **Bullies may also be excluded from the school yard at break and/or lunch time.**
- **Offenders and victims of bullying may also be referred for counselling**
- **Where cases relating to either student or teacher remain unresolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the Board of Management.**
- **In order to appeal a decision, a parent/student may request a review by writing to the Principal. (Appendix 3)**

7. SHS programme of support for pupils affected by bullying can include the following:

- A school Counsellor may be appointed to a student to work with them on emotional regulation, anxiety, anger management etc.
- Updates are given at weekly SST meeting to monitor the ongoing situation
- Student placed on red and green list and reviewed by SST meeting
- Mentor given to student-for a check in and support
- Students met by SST and goals chart created and reviewed so the student meets the new goals set around behaviour
- Student/s may be referred to external agency, GP, Jigsaw etc
- Year Head and SPHE teacher will monitor students on an ongoing basis

8. Supervising 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.

In certain cases, however, it may be necessary for the school to seek the assistance of other local persons and formal agencies such as NEPS, HSE social workers, community workers, Gardaí etc.

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. Adoption / of Policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on ____/____/____

11.Publishing of 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 and the patron if requested.

12.Review of 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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily available to parents and pupils on request) 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

Policy review takes place with the staff, SMT, and Student Council.(see Appendix 1)

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Signed: _____ **Principal**

Date: _____

Appendix 1

Checklist for Protocol for Procedures and Review of Policy

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.

1. Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?

Yes No

2. Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?

Yes No

3. Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff, including new staff?

Yes No

4. Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and the procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?

Yes No

5. Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?

Yes No

6. Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?

Yes No

7. Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?

Yes No

8. Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?

Yes No

9. Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?

Yes No

10. Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?

Yes No

11. 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?

Yes No

12. Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?

Yes No

13. Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?

Yes No

14. Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?

Yes No

15. Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (in the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?

Yes No

16. Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?

Yes No

17. Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?

Yes No

Appendix 2

Record Sheet

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name: _____ Class: _____

Date _____

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

3. Source and location of bullying concern/report

(tick relevant box(es))

Pupil concerned	
Other pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	
Yard	
Classroom	
Corridor	
School Bus	
Other	

4. Name of person who reported the bullying concern

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5. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es))

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
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Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Travelling Community	Other (specify)

7. Brief description of bullying behaviour and its impact- who? where ?what?

8. Details of action taken

Date Interviewed:

SST informed/YH informed:

Parent informed:

Individual:

Group:

Reports filed:

Report reviewed after 20 days:

Review/evaluation

Signed _____ **(Relevant Teacher)**

Date _____

Date submitted to the Student Support Team _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Appendix 3

Appealing a decision following a bullying incident

To review a decision a parent is requested to write to the Principal setting out their reasons for appealing a decision.

Appendix 4

Types/Examples of Bullying/Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

General	Harassment <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical Aggression• Damage to property• Name-calling• Slagging• Taunting• Verbal abuse• Offensive joke• Victimisation• Intimidation• The “look”• Exclusion• Extortion• Graffiti• Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intrusion through interfering with personal belongings• An attack by rumour, gossip, innuendo or ridicule on any individual’s reputation
Cyber	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Silent phone calls• Abusive phone calls• Abusive text messages• Abusive email• Abusive website Abusive comments on any social media platform in pop culture <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online polls/fake pages/camera phone abuse
Homophobic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taunting• Name calling• Spreading rumours
Racial	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic background
Relational	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ignoring and isolation• Exclusion from a group• Taking someone’s friends away• Spreading rumours• Talking loudly enough so the intended victim can hear• The ‘look’

This list above is not exhaustive.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

The following are signs and symptoms that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied. When these signs are repeatedly occurring it warrants an investigation to ascertain what is affecting the pupil.

- School refusal-unwillingness to go to school or stay in school/mitching, and unwillingness to return to school after a break and refusal to share what is troubling for them
- Physical illness-headaches, stomach upset, and physical bruising
- Anxiety –anxious about going to school on the bus/ need a different school travel arrangement/visible signs of distress/crying/sleeping issues/change in eating habits/vomiting/bedwetting
- Behaviour-unexplained and sudden changes in behaviour/mood and wellbeing/self-harm/out of character responses and comments
- School performance-loss of concentration, drop in performance and generally less motivated about school and hobbies
- Damage to possessions or possessions missing
- Inexplicable requests- for money, clothing, etc.

Appendix 5

School wide strategies to prevent Bullying

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:

- Giving constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Encouraging students to Take Action and report any incidents
- Providing supportive and caring environment
- A student's sexual orientation cannot be used as a means of mockery or intimidating behaviour
- Displaying anti-bullying charters at various locations around the school
- Organising the school community in order to minimise opportunities for bullying
- YSI (Young Social Innovators) annual strategies and "Foster Friendship" programmes
- 1st/2nd year Leadership and Friendship Programmes to promote and highlight positive friendship
- Providing talks on prevention strategies re Cyber bullying for both parents and students
- **Teachers have ways of dealing with a bully without getting you into trouble.**
- Advising students not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.
- Advising students "DO NOT SUPPORT A BULLY"
- Providing workshops for year groups
- Modelling respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times
- Explicitly teaching pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Displaying key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Consistently tackling 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 AEN.
- Providing Anti- Bullying Workshop and Social Media Workshop provided for all 1st year students at the start of the school year.
- Positively encouraging 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 involving parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promoting the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.

- Highlighting and explicitly teaching school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- Ensuring there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- Students cooperating with school staff 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.
- Student Council involvement in review of the policy and creating an awareness among peer groups

Appendix 6

Advice to parents

If you know or suspect that your child is a bully, you must investigate it thoroughly and act immediately. Like all behavioural patterns, bullying is learned and practiced repeatedly. Early intervention is vital if the destructive pattern is to be broken. Explaining it away or refusing to believe it is happening simply allows the behaviour to become more ingrained.

Your child must accept responsibility for her behaviour. If you can get the child to admit to the bullying behaviour and agree to stop it, all is well. Then if apologies are necessary, you can help your child to make them and start afresh. If you get a report from the school that your child is bullying, a few points are worth noting:

- Remember that teachers are not happy to tell you that your child is a bully.
- Question your child as soon as possible and try to establish the facts
- Visit the school with the information on the incident
- If the situation is clear cut, sort it out quickly and amicably
- At all times indicate that you want your child to accept responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Work with the school to resolve the matter and make it clear to the school that you do not want nor will you accept your child's misbehaviour. Talk with your child and listen. Keep the lines of communication open. Try to get them to understand the point of view of their victim. It can help to bring up a situation where they were made to feel bad by someone else.
- School and parent working together can, and do, sort out the majority of these problems. However, please bear in mind that solving these types of problems often takes time.

Appendix 7

Guidelines for staff investigation a bullying incident

- Parents and pupils 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.
- Teachers take a calm, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- When investigating incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher asks questions of what, where, when, who and why. This is done with a calm **no blame approach**, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, it will be decided if those involved should be met as a group.
- When there is group meeting, each member has an opportunity to give her account of what happened to ensure there is full clarity on the issue.
- Each member of the group is asked to write an account of what happened. This matter is then referred to the Year Head Committee Meeting/Pastoral Committee.
- Each member of a group will be supported through the process as they may face pressure from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties may be contacted at an early stage (if appropriate) to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (according to the school policy). The school will/may advise parents on how to reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school.
- Where it has been determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to her that she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy. Support and direction will be provided to promote a change of behaviour and the situation will be closely monitored.
- It will also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school;
- **Informing the victims' parents/guardians-** In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved may be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken according to our anti bullying policy

- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved are arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- In accordance with Child Protection Procedures the Child Protection Oversight Report shall specify the number of cases, since the last Board of Management meeting where the DLP has reported a concern about a child arising from alleged bullying behaviour amongst pupils, or where the DLP has sought advice from TUSLA as to whether to report a concern about a child arising from alleged bullying behaviour amongst pupils.

Appendix 8

Review meeting with Student Support Team:

Student:

Student Support Team Members:

Date :

Three questions asked

1. What happened?
2. Who was affected?
3. What would you do differently/what do you have to do going forward

Goals going forward to support student	
How I will achieve these goals?	
What I have to do to achieve these goals?	

Note: Student's Journal to be signed by teacher and goal sheet given to student to assist improvement

Appendix 9

Infographic on Anti Bullying for Students designed by the Student Council and used for their anti-bullying campaign on the awareness of and the effects of bullying.