Holycross National School
ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Holycross National School has adopted the following Anti-Bullying Policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour. The policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.

2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behavior.
   - Our school promotes a positive school culture and climate which:
     1. is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
     2. encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment;
     3. promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
   - Effective leadership;
   - 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-
     1. build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
     2. explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
   - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
   - Supports for staff;
   - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
   - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, bullying is defined as follows:
   Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

   The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:
   - deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
   - cyber-bullying and
   - Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, **do not fall within the definition of bullying** and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

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

The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying is the class teacher initially, and the Principal teacher thereafter, if necessary. The relevant teacher will consult with the Principal/deputy Principal once an allegation has been made. In the absence of the Principal, the deputy Principal will become the relevant person. **Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.**

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 *(see Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools)*:

- We will adopt a **Whole School Approach** where all have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying and an awareness of its negative impact as well as fostering respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of **diversity** to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and highlighting the unacceptability of bullying behavior.
- The fostering and enhancing of the **self-esteem** of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- The school's **Code of Behaviour** will be brought to the attention of all pupils at the start of the school year. The rules and reasons for them will be taught and discussed and referenced throughout the school year, on a needs basis. All shall be carried out at an age appropriate level.
- An **annual audit** of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources.
- Teachers will assist children in developing **empathy** through discussing feelings and encouraging children to 'place themselves in the other person's shoes'. Problem solving strategies will be explored with the children to help resolve any conflict.
- **Supervision and monitoring** of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school. We will endeavour to educate children on appropriate online behaviour, raising awareness of **cyber-bullying**

and its implications.

- Children will be made aware that **bullying is an unacceptable form of behaviour**. This shall be achieved through following the Stay Safe, Walk Tall and RSE programmes. Linkage to the RSE, Drama and P.E. curriculum shall be made, where applicable.
- Teachers will engage children in **group activities** which will encourage them to work together, co-operate, listen to and respect one another's views; e.g. Aistear, Team Teaching and sporting events.
- **Encourage a culture of telling**, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that pupils know **who to tell and how** to tell, e.g.:
    - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
    - Hand note up with homework
    - Feelings or Worry box?
    - Get apparent/guardian or friend to tell on your behalf
    - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- **Clear protocols** to encourage parents/guardians to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- Implementation of the school's **Acceptable Use Policy** in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that access to technology within the school is strictly monitored and the pupils' use of mobile phones is strictly prohibited.

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:

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationship of the parties involved (rather than apportion blame);

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach.
Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parents/guardians understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting Bullying Behaviour:

1. Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school. **Incident report forms** will be kept in all classrooms and in the office and are completed thereafter.
2. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
3. Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incident of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Investigating and dealing with incidents

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant teacher, in consultation with the Principal/Deputy Principal, will exercise his/her professional judgement to

determine whether bullying has occurred, what type of bullying and how best to resolve the situation.

- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and pupils are required to **co-operate with any investigation** and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved, as quickly as possible.

- Teachers will take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.

- Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class, where possible, however, some incidents might be best investigated outside of the classroom situation, to ensure the privacy of all involved.

- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involves can also provide very useful information in this way.

- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher(s) will seek answers to questions of what, who, where, when and why. This will be achieved in a calm manner, 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, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.

- Each member of the group will be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after being interviewed by the teacher. It may also be helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident where age appropriate

- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher, in consultation with the Principal/Deputy Principal, 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 (by reference to the school policy). The school will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.

- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil 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 and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

- It must also be made clear to all involved (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.

- In the event that they have been involved in bullying behavior they are asked to sign a binding promise that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s).

- The Relevant Teacher does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behavior as a 'mistake' that can and must be remedies. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish the perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. Pupils who report bullying therefore are not getting other 'in trouble' so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continued.

- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the Relevant Teacher will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. This information is recorded on the back of the incident report form and on the Appendix 3 document which is filed and stored by the principal.

- If a pupil has signed such a promise but then choses to break that promise and continue the bullying behavior this can then no longer be considered a 'mistake'. In this event the parent/guardian(s) will be informed and requested to countersign their child's promise. Breach of this additional promise by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities (See sanctions below)

Sanctions

Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that promise. Any of the following sanctions may be imposed:
- S/he may be required to sign another promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian;
- Parent/guardian(s) may be contacted by the Relevant Teacher and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured;
- Parent/guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the Relevant Teacher and Principal;
- The pupil may be suspended from school; (See school's Code of Behaviour)
- The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be expelled from school.

Follow Up and Recording

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed, the relevant teacher must, in consultation with the Principal/Deputy Principal, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:

- ❖ Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased:
- ❖ Whether any issues between the parties involved have been resolved, as far as is practicable.
- ❖ Whether the relationship between the parties have been restored, as far as practicable
- ❖ Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- ❖ Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be 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.
- ❖ An additional follow-up meeting with parents of children involved may take place after

an appropriate time to ensure that the matter has been resolves satisfactorily.

❖ Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.

❖ In the event that a parent/guardian has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents/guardians of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of Bullying Behaviour

Noting and reporting of bullying behaviour will be documented using the template for the recording bullying behaviour (Appendix 3). All records will be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and recording bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal: Pre-determination that bullying has occurred:

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them in the incident book. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports, of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same. A copy of this is to be given to the Principal.
- The relevant teacher must inform the Principal of all incidents being investigated.

Formal: Stage 1- Determination that Bullying has occurred:

- If it has been established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

Formal: Stage 2 -Appendix 3 (DES Procedures excerpt)

- The relevant teacher, in consultation with the Principal/Deputy Principal must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
  - ✓ In cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately addressed with 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred; and
  - ✓ Where the school has decided, as part of its anti-bullying policy, that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal, as applicable.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher and a copy maintained by the Principal. Due consideration needs to be given to where these records are kept and how long they will be retained.

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

Bullied Pupils:
- Ending the bullying behaviour
- Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils
- Changing the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations
- After resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a victim-impact statement
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school)
- If pupils require counselling of further supports the school will endeavor to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organize same, i.e. NEPS, HSE etc

Bullying Pupils:
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet'
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this
- Making adequate counselling facilities available to help those who need to learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school)
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

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.
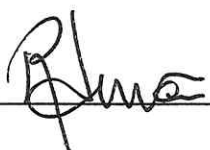
Prevention of Harassment
The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine 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 has been made available to school personnel and published on the school website. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of education and Skills 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 and published on the school website. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Ratification and Review

This policy was formally ratified by the Board of Management on ___19/9/24___.

Signed: _____ Chairperson, BoM   Date:___19/9/24___

Signed: _____ Principal   Date: ___19/9/24___

ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE ANTI-BULLYING

- Modelling of desired behaviour – respect is key.
- Targeted groups and individuals for social skills, self-esteem etc.
- Extra-curricular activities; hurling, football, Peace Proms etc.
- Links with the community – hurling club, camogie club etc.
- Curricular – each child is given the opportunity to succeed; differentiation, playing to strengths and interests.
- Website and Twitter & Newsletters– showcase our successes, keeping parents informed, highlighting achievements; individuals, groups and whole school.
- Awareness amongst staff; behaviour is discussed regularly during staff meetings and it is ensured that all are aware of procedures.
- All school staff are asked to monitor children and report any concerns to the relevant teacher.
- Internet Safety – Member of An Garda Siochána gives talk to parents about the dangers of the internet and cyber bullying.
- Supervision – 3 adults on the yard at all times. On wet days these adults circulate around the classrooms and monitor behaviour.
- Strong culture of telling, pupils and parents are always encouraged to communicate issues to teachers. Our strong communication links with parents is very helpful with this, they are never afraid to call, email or talk to staff if a problem arises.
- Principal meet and greet in the mornings.
- Anti-bullying policy – clear and structured guidelines for teachers, parents and pupils – expectations are clear.
- Buddy Bench

Examples of Bullying Behaviour

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	- Harassment based on any of the grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. - Physical aggression - Damage to property - Name calling - Slagging - The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person - Offensive graffiti - Extortion - Intimidating - Insulting or offensive gestures - The "look" - Invasion of personal space - A combination of any of the listed
Cyber Bullying	**Denigration:** Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation **Harassment:** Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual **Impersonation:** Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name **Flaming:** Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight **Trickery:** Fooling someone into sharing personal information which is then posted online **Outing:** Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images **Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group** **Cyber Stalking:** ✓ Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety ✓ Silent telephone/mobile phone calls ✓ Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls ✓ Abusive texts ✓ Abusive email ✓ Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook, Twitter, You Tube or on games consoles ✓ Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures ✓ Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

Identity Based Behaviours

Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and member of the Traveller community.

Homophobic and Transgender	• Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g. gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
Race, Nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include: • Malicious gossip • Isolation and exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • "Bitching" • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The "look" • Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way
Sexual	• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	• Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person's disability • Setting others up for ridicule