

SACRED HEART GRAMMAR SCHOOL



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Rationale

Sacred Heart Grammar School believes that its students have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the targets. It also affects those who watch and other students who can be drawn in by group pressure. The school strongly disapproves of bullying and will take steps to deal with it firmly, fairly and promptly.

MISSION STATEMENT

In Sacred Heart Grammar School we aim to transmit the spirit of St Francis and St Clare by fostering a friendly and caring atmosphere where students are encouraged to respect the dignity of the human person.

Our purpose is, in consultation with everyone in the school community, to provide a safe and secure learning environment for all, one which is conducive to effective teaching and learning, free from intimidation and fear.

PRINCIPLES

- Students have a right to learn in a secure atmosphere free from emotional and physical harm.
- The school will not tolerate bullying behaviour and will have in place strategies to deal with this issue.
- Bullied students will be listened to and their needs will be paramount.
- Reported incidents will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

What is BULLYING?

Bullying is described as persistent unwelcome hurtful behaviour, usually deliberate but sometimes unintentional. It undermines self confidence and causes embarrassment, pain or discomfort. It can take a number of forms: physical (including gesture), verbal, intimidation, extortion, exclusion and the misuse of internet or mobile phone technology. It may be carried out by an individual or group in the school community.

This description of bullying has been agreed as a result of consultation with students, parents, staff and governors.

FORMS OF BULLYING

- **Physical:** Hitting, pushing, spitting at another student or attempting to cause any physical harm.
- **Damage to property:** By stealing, hiding or damaging it.
- **Verbal:** Using offensive names when addressing a student, teasing or spreading rumours about another student or her family, belittling another student's abilities and achievements, ridiculing another student's appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms.
- **Intimidation:** Threatening another student, writing offensive notes or graffiti about another student.
- **Extortion:** Forcing another student to hand over her property.
- **Exclusion:** Excluding another student from a group activity, or isolating her socially.
- **Cyber Bullying:** Misusing technology (internet or mobiles) to hurt or humiliate another person.

LINKS WITH OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES

The school's Anti-Bullying Policy is linked to other school policies, for example, Pastoral Care; Child Protection; Positive Behaviour/Discipline Policy; Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy.

PARTICIPATION & CONSULTATION PROCESS

- Awareness raising programmes (Curriculum, assemblies and special events during Anti-Bullying Week)
- Questionnaires distributed to students, parents and whole school staff.
- Obtaining the views of selected students
- Monitoring evaluation and review.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAKEHOLDERS.

The Responsibilities of Staff

Our staff will

- Foster in our students, self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others.
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our students.
- Discuss bullying in Form Class, and/or subject classes as appropriate, stressing the damage it causes and the importance of telling a teacher when it happens.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.
- Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- Report suspected cases of bullying to the relevant Form Teacher, Year Head, or Mrs Brown, Vice Principal in charge of Pastoral Care.
- Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken.
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.
- Help students to develop coping skills to deal with this issue through work in Form Class and individual student interviews.

- Aim to empower and encourage students (both target and bully) to take responsibility in finding a solution.

The Responsibilities of Students

We expect our students to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying.
- Intervene to protect the student who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying.

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:

- Share any problems they are experiencing with a member of staff or another student, knowing that they will be listened to and the school will deal with the situation.

The Responsibilities of Parents

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying.
- Advising their children to report any bullying to the relevant Form Teacher, Year Head, or Mrs Brown, Vice Principal in charge of Pastoral Care.
- Explaining the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other students.
- Telling their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying.
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken.
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved.
- Co-operating with the school, if their children are accused of bullying.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES.

A range of strategies are used to promote positive behaviour and identify students who are experiencing difficulties of any kind.

- Students are encouraged to respect the dignity of the human person, be sensitive towards others and protect the safety of one another.
- Students as part of their LLW class are encouraged to develop a class charter which identifies rights, responsibilities and a code of behaviour.
- Questionnaires and surveys are regularly distributed to the students and a system of interviewing also gives students the opportunity to report incidents of bullying or other problems.
- Bullying and anti-social behaviour are discussed in Form Class, and use is made of DVD and written material to reinforce the coping skills necessary to deal with such behaviour.
- Information about what to do if involved in a bullying incident is available in the Student Planner.
- Students are encouraged to express their feelings, fears or concerns, knowing that they will be listened to sympathetically.

- Awareness raising is undertaken on a regular basis and typically involves publicity material around the school, guest speakers, poster competitions and class discussion.
- A system of “Senior Prefects” operates in Years 8-10 where students can share concerns with older students. These may be reported back to the School Council or a member of staff.
- Students are made aware of the risks associated with new technologies and empowered with the knowledge and skills to cope with bullying behaviour coming from texting or internet sources.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- When an incident of bullying is reported it will be investigated promptly.
- The alleged bully and target will be interviewed separately.
- The student(s) involved will be offered the opportunity to talk about their experience with a teacher of their choice or with the school counsellor.
- The student(s) involved will be offered continuing support and encouragement as needed.
- The students involved (both bully and bullied) will be empowered and encouraged to take responsibility in finding a solution.
- Parents/carers of the students concerned may be contacted.
- All relevant parties will be kept fully informed of the action taken.
- The situation will be monitored and feedback will be provided.
- Depending on the nature of the bullying, the matter may be dealt with at any stage through the school’s Positive Behaviour/ Discipline Policy.
- Details of incidents of bullying will be recorded and held centrally

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

As part of the Continuous Professional Development of staff, training is provided in recognising behaviours which may indicate a student is being bullied and in strategies for dealing with incidents of bullying.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The policy will be monitored and reviewed in consultation with all members of the school community every 2/3 years.

SIGNATURE/DATE

(Includes the signature of the Chair of the Board of Governors and the Principal.)