

# Holywell Educate Together 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 Holywell Educate Together National School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall Positive Behaviour Policy. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013. In addition to an Anti-Bullying Policy, an explicit Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy is set out to enable the children to understand, define and combat cyber bullying.

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 behaviour:

- A positive school culture and climate (See Appendix 1) 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, involves collaboration among and between staff & pupils and promotes respectful relationships across the school community and encourages the work of the student council in this area.
- A Mission Statement encouraging pupils to be the best selves they can be. (See Appendix 2)
- A specific Anti-Bullying Programme developed by the Anti-Bullying Institute of Ireland taught to pupils from 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Class (Please see separate ABI Care Programme)
- Use of Restorative Practice in resolving conflicts within the school environment
- Effective leadership
- A school-wide approach
- A shared **and complete** 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 **within the school's Dignity in the Workplace Policy**
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies **within the ABI Care Programme**) and ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy. Such an evaluation is carried out by the Board of Management when specific bullying cases are reported and discussed at meetings. The Board will evaluate the effectiveness of procedures in the policy on a case by case basis.

3. In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools bullying is defined as follows:

*'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 do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy.

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

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools and appears as Appendix 3 of this document.

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

- The class and/or support teacher(s) initially
- The Principal and Deputy Principal thereafter if necessary
- The Chairperson and Board of Management (in the event of suspension/exclusion).

5. The following education and prevention strategies, at the appropriate and relevant level for each class, will be used by the school:

- Prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying, involving strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils. **These include the *ABI Care Programme* (developed by the *Anti-Bullying Institute of Ireland*) *Friends for Life and Fun Friends* (endorsed by WHO- *Anti-Anxiety Programme*)**
- Provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth. **These include *Assemblies, Star of the Week, Compliment Friday, Dojo Points System, ABI Care Certificates and Core Value Certificates***
- Prevention and awareness raising measures focusing on cyber-bullying by educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online (assisted through the school's internet safety policy) **This is facilitated by visiting speakers from expert cyber-bullying organisations to school and following Department of Education approved cyber-bullying teaching resources.**
- Teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner (how they treat students, parents and colleagues in a respectful manner and through encouraging an open-talk climate in their classrooms and throughout the school).
- There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Stay Safe & RSE programmes at primary level are personal safety skills programmes which seek to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. The Human Rights element within the Ethics and Social Justice section of the 'Learn Together' curriculum looks at homophobia under the heading of 'The Nine Grounds of Discrimination under the Equal Status Act'

- Various other social, health and media education programmes can further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour, **such as the school's specific Anti-Bullying Programme, Yellow Flag activities and lessons, and taking part in national competitions such as the *Different Families, Same Love* run by the INTO.**
- **The above endeavours can be, and is,** extended into many other areas **of the curriculum including** Art, Drama, **Music** and Physical Education. Co-operation and group enterprise can be promoted through team sports, school clubs and societies as well as through practical subjects.
- Sporting activities in particular can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression. GAA coaching is offered to some classes from outside agencies and teachers are also involved in coaching the school's football teams.

6. 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 **outlined below and run alongside the school's ABI Care Programme.**

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame). With this in mind the schools procedures are as follows:

- (i) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved. This investigation involves open discussion between the parties involved, questioning witnesses, teaching of specific lessons to target and address the issues at hand. **Please see ABI Programme Intervention Strategies.**
- (ii) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s). 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.
- (iii) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
- (iv) 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. Parents who interfere with the investigation process inappropriately (by approaching a child or their families) can contaminate the process and subject to the extent of the interference (threaten, abuse or exhibit aggressive behaviour, may be banned from the school grounds, or referred to An Garda Síochána, until a resolution has been reached).
- (v) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.
- (vi) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- (vii) Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy and discretion of all involved.
- (ix) All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- (x) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher(s) should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- (xi) If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first (however in some cases this may not be appropriate). Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting,

each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.

(xii) Each member of a group should be supported and reassured through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.

(xii) Where the relevant teacher(s) has/have determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

(xiii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).

(xiv) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school should 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.

(xvi) It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required (please see Appendix 4), this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.

(xvii) 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

(xviii) An additional follow-up meeting with parents of the children involved may take place after an appropriate time to ensure that the matter has been resolved satisfactorily.

(xx) Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures

(xxi) In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

**RECORDING:** Noting and reporting of bullying behaviour is to be documented using the *template for recording bullying behaviour* (Appendix 4). All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

(i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s), the relevant teacher(s) will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same

(ii) If it is established by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher(s) 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

(iii) The relevant teacher(s) must use the recording template at Appendix 5 to record the bullying behaviour which is available on the server

**7. 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. Morning supervision begins in the yard or hall (weather depending) at 8.20am. Morning break and lunch time supervision are carried out on a rota basis by all teaching and non-teaching staff (Special Needs Assistants). All incidents of note are recorded by supervising staff. (Please see Supervision of Students Policy).

8. This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Holywell Educate Together National School in January 2014, reviewed in April 2015 and reviewed again in October 2018.

9. This policy will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and made available to the Parent Teacher Association A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron upon request.

10. 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 accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Teacher 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: \_\_\_\_\_



## **APPENDIX 1: Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate**

Holywell ETNS promotes a positive school culture through endorsing the basic ethos of Educate Together. The Educate Together idea is simple: educate children in an all-inclusive environment, with respect for all, irrespective of gender, religion, physical ability, ethnic or social background. All children are cherished. The ethos of the school is the “characteristic spirit or attitudes” of our community. This distinctive spirit that is felt, witnessed, embraced and developed in school. 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. We follow the **HETNS** Rules after consultation with **the pupils, staff and parents within** our school community (Please refer to Appendix 6).

- 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.
- **Teach each ABI Module at the same time on the same date of every month to generate discussion on it in the school community and at home.**
- **Update the school App regularly with news on the ABI Programme, Core Values and positive stories on behaviour at school**
- Holywell ETNS promotes positive behaviour and friendship **throughout the school year, and explicitly** in its annual ‘Friendship Week’, where the school promotes friendship, positive language, yard buddies, and a friendship charter as some of the activities for the themed week.
- 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 Special Educational Need. Please refer to The Nine Grounds of Discrimination under the Equal Status Act.
- 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, ie ‘Golden Time’, ‘Student of the Week’ awards, certificates etc.
- 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 Teacher 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
- Avoid events which may alienate some children, such as the teacher distributing birthday invitations and children of particular denominations celebrating a religious festival without their classmates.
- 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
- **Encourage pupils to show each month’s Core Value in a real way in school and at home**

## APPENDIX 2: Holywell ETNS Mission Statement

*Holywell Educate Together National School stands tall and proud of its school community. At Holywell, we are firmly rooted in the values of equality, democracy and inclusion, bearing the fruits of empathy, compassion and confidence in our pupils. Every child here will have a passion for learning and will be sensitively nurtured and sustained from bud to blossom to reach their full heights, like The Tree.*

- Devised by Pupils, Parents and Staff of Holywell ETNS 2017



### APPENDIX 3: Types of bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

**Physical aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in ‘mess fights’, they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain

**Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation. It may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

**Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person’s attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: ‘Do this or I won’t be your friend anymore’(implied or stated), a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy), non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours about a person or giving them the ‘silent treatment’.

**Cyber-bullying:** This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, email, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face-to face-contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person’s sexuality, appearance etc.

**Name calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) that hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g. size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers are also targeted

**Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil’s locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden

**Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

## **APPENDIX 4: Actions and Sanctions Enforced for Carrying out Repeated, Bullying Behaviour**

Sanctions to deal with persistent bullying behaviour will only be enforced when discussion, lessons, parental involvement **and all interventions of the ABI Programme** have still not achieved an end to the bullying behaviour. Such sanctions are those exercised in the school's Positive Behaviour Policy:

- Parents/guardians must endeavour to support their child and school to comply with rules and aim to give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future. On failing this, the pupil will be suspended for a temporary period.
- In the case of gross misbehaviour the Board authorises the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents/guardians. The maximum initial period of suspension is three school days.
- The Board of Management can authorize a further period of exclusion up to a maximum of 10 school days to allow for consultation with the pupils or pupils parents/guardians.
- In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management will authorize a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed

Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will be sought from support services within the wider community, e.g. Community Care Services

### ***Suspension***

Examples of grounds for suspension:

- the student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- the student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety to themselves and others in the school community.
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- the student is responsible for a single incident of serious misconduct.

After other interventions are tried and reasons why these have not worked are reviewed, the decision to suspend a student can be made. This decision will be made by the Board of Management. Each case will be looked at individually taking into account the child's circumstances.

A single incident of gross misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

### ***Expulsion***

Examples of grounds for expulsion:

- the student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- the student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property.

Expulsion will only be considered when the Board of Management have tried a series of other interventions and believes all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour have been exhausted.

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence (for instance, a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff, actual violence or physical assault, supplying illegal drugs to other students).

When expulsion is considered, the following steps will be taken:

- A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
- A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.

- Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation, and the holding of a hearing
- Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
- Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
- Confirmation of the decision to expel.
- The decision to expel will take effect 20 days after the National Education Welfare Board has received notification in writing
- Where the school has expelled a pupil and all appeals processes both internal and external have been exhausted, the student's expulsion will be reported on the student absence report form.



## Appendix 5: 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	
Other pupil(s)	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

### 4. Location of incidents -tick relevant box(es)

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
Other	

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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### 6. Type of Bullying Behaviour - tick relevant box(es)

Physical aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious gossip	
Name calling			
Other (specify)			

### 7. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### 8. Details of actions taken

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Relevant Teacher 1)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Relevant Teacher 1)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 6: HETNS Rules

The HETNS Rules have been drawn up for Holywell ETNS. This acronym was devised by the Positive Behaviour Policy Committee, with a consultation and voting process completed by all school staff, parents and the Student Council. While each class has a particular set of classroom rules, this acronym will be displayed throughout the school, will be used in Assemblies and will be our base set of rules for how we expect pupils to conduct themselves in the school environment.

Honest and helpful

Everyone works together

Think before you act

Notice others and show respect

Safe and sensible

